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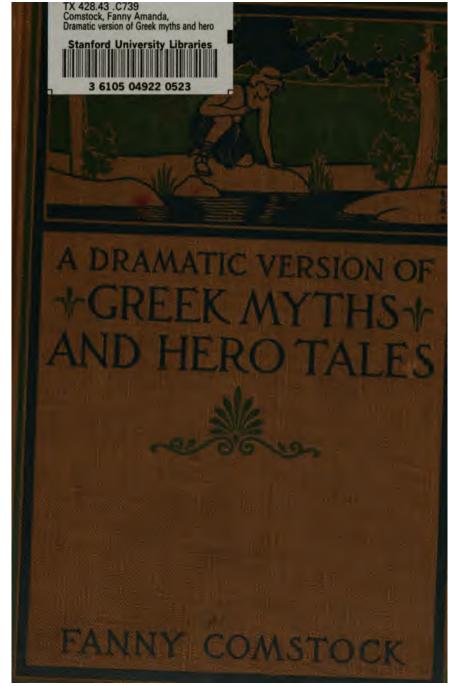
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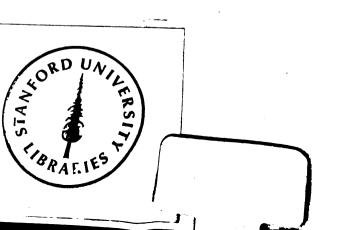




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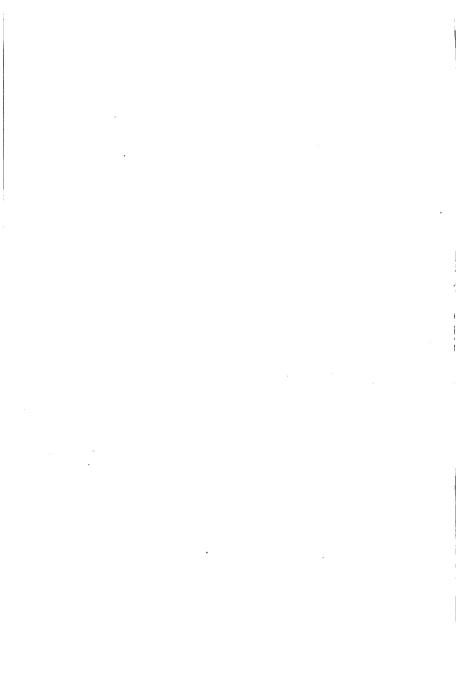
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A DRAMATIC VERSION OF GREEK MYTHS AND HERO TALES

BY

FANNY COMSTOCK

FORMERLY OF BRIDGEWATER NORMAL SCHOOL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
CHARLES COPELAND

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

This dramatic version of Greek folk stories is designed especially for a reading book, and as such is adapted to the higher grades of the grammar school. It is intended also as an aid to the dramatic representation of these stories. A third use may be for reference in connection with story-telling to younger classes.

FANNY COMSTOCK



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PANDORA

CHARACTERS: Jupiter, Mercury, Neptune, Apollo, Epimetheus; Venus, Pandora, Hope

SCENE I

(The gods and goddesses are sitting in council on Mount Olympus.)

Jupiter. Enjoy your power, O ye gods of Olympus, while ye may. Who knows how soon the upstart, Man, will hurl you from your places? Since Minerva has given to Prometheus to light his torch at Apollo's chariot, fire, swift-stealing servant of the gods, is given to Man. Behold the weak creature, brother of the animals, yet by this gift made like one of us!

Mercury. True, O Jupiter, the Titans have proudly made their plaything, Man, the equal of us who dwell on Olympus. Prometheus, who stole the divine fire, and Epimetheus, who gave it to Man, are alike guilty. What shall be the punishment?

Jupiter. You have heard the voice of Mercury. Who among you will name the penalty?

Venus. Who but the Thunderer can pronounce a fitting doom?

Neptune. The words of Venus are wise. Name the punishment, Jupiter, king of the gods.

Jupiter. I will send a new creature, Woman, to Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus. She shall perplex and torment them. She shall be the restless gadfly, buzzing and disturbing,—the deceitful vision, tempting to evil.

Apollo. Shall she not have good gifts too?

Jupiter. Yes; so shall the punishment be more complete. She shall awaken love, yet have power to destroy. What wilt thou give the creature, Apollo?

Apollo. I bestow on Woman the gift of music, to soothe all pain, to banish care.

Jupiter. Mercury, what is thy gift to Woman?

Mercury. The gift of persuasion shall be mine. So wondrously shall Woman plead, that whoever hears must grant the thing she asks, be it good or ill.

Jupiter. It is well. So shall Woman bring the proud Titans confusion and vexation of spirit. Venus, name thy gift.

Venus. I give beauty,—the beauty of the rainbow, the beauty of the spring, the beauty of the stars. All this beauty I give to Woman, to atone for the heavy woes she shall bring.

Jupiter. The gifts are wise. Cunningly shall the creature, Woman, work my design of punishment. With one hand shall she bring good, with the other, evil. It is well.

SCENE II

(The home of *Epimetheus*. A large covered box is in a conspicuous place. *Epimetheus* and *Pandora* enter together.)

Epimetheus. Thrice welcome, dearest Pandora, most precious of all my gifts! Here you shall live in peace and love forever. I leave you now, but soon I will return to you.

Pandora. While I stay here alone, I will look at this box. Who knows what treasures it may contain!

Epimetheus. Go anywhere and everywhere, open anything else, but touch not that box, as you value your happiness.

Pandora. Be not afraid that I shall lose the precious contents. I will but lift the lid quickly and look within, a moment. Surely that can do no harm.

Epimetheus. If you lift the lid ever so little, I will not answer for the consequences. Better were it that you had never been born, than that you should peep within the box. See, it is securely tied. Keep but your fingers from the knot, and all will be well. (Epimetheus goes out.)

Pandora (going to the box). What a strange box! What rich, dark wood! And what wonderful carving! Flowers, leaves, faces, all shown with rare skill. I wonder who made it. Epimetheus did not tell me that. I wonder who brought it here. (Pause) I wonder

who tied it with such a curious knot. (Pause) I wonder what is in it. (Bending over and looking at the knot) I believe I see how the knot was made. I am sure I could untie the cord, and then tie it again precisely as it is now. But of course I shall not untie it.

(She goes away from the box, takes flowers from a table, and begins to deck herself with them. She goes on tiptoe to the box again, then goes away resolutely, sits with her back to the box, and begins to weave the flowers into a garland, singing as she does so. Suddenly she throws the flowers away and runs to the box.)

There is no use trying! I cannot forget the wonderful box. (She leans over it as if looking in a mirror, and arranges her hair.) It is polished so beautifully that I can see myself in it. (She sits on the floor beside the box, looking at it with hands clasped tightly in her lap.) I suppose there is something very precious inside, and Epimetheus does not want me to have it. He is going to give it to somebody else. It must be very beautiful indeed. I wish I could see it. I would n't hurt it a bit, only look at it. But I must not open the box.

(She goes away again, but soon comes back. She grasps the handles and tries in vain to lift the box. She raises one end with both hands, and drops it quickly.)

How heavy! It must be full of gold and silver! (She starts as if she heard something inside, and listens, putting her ear down to the box.) I wonder if it is something alive! I thought I heard something move. (She takes the knot in her fingers and works on it silently, until she unties it.

She holds up the loose ends.) There! Now I must tie it up again. (She works with increasing nervousness and perplexity.) I can't tie the knot! The cord keeps slipping through my fingers! What will Epimetheus say? (She sobs.) Since it is untied, I may as well look, for Epimetheus will believe I have looked in, when he sees the knot untied, no matter what I say. (She raises the lid slowly, just as *Epimetheus* enters.)

Epimetheus. Oh! something evil has stung me. Oh! what pain! Pandora, why have you opened this horrible box, and let all these ugly stinging things escape?

(Pandora screams, and puts her hand to her forehead. Epimetheus runs to her, and brushes the insect away. Epimetheus sits with his back to Pandora, sullen and silent. Pandora throws herself on the floor, crying bitterly, resting her head on the closed box. Presently a tap is heard within the box.)

Pandora (lifting her head). What can that be? (Epimetheus takes no notice of the question.) You are very unkind not to speak to me. (The tap is heard again.) Who are you? Who is inside this dreadful box?

Hope. Only lift the lid, and you shall see.

Pandora. No, no! I have had enough of lifting the lid! You are inside the box, naughty creature, and there you shall stay! There are plenty of your ugly brothers and sisters flying about here. You need never think that I shall be so foolish as to let you out.

Epimetheus. You are wise too late, Pandora.

Hope. Ah! You had much better let me out. I am not like those naughty stinging creatures that bring pain and unhappiness. They are no brothers and sisters of mine, as you would see at once if you only had a glimpse of me. Come, come, Pandora! I am sure you will let me out. (Pandora and Epimetheus seem more cheerful.)

Pandora. My dear Epimetheus, have you heard this sweet little voice?

Epimetheus. How can I help hearing it? Pandora. Shall I lift the lid again?

Epimetheus. Just as you please. You have done so much mischief already, that perhaps you may as well do a little more. One other Trouble, in such a swarm as you have already set adrift in the world, can make no great difference.

Pandora (wiping her eyes). You might speak a little more kindly!

Hope (laughingly). Ah! he knows he is longing to see me. Come, my dear Pandora, lift the lid. I am in a great hurry to comfort you. Only let me have some fresh air, and you shall soon see that matters are not quite so dismal as you think them.

Pandora. Epimetheus, come what may, I am resolved to open the box.

Epimetheus (hastening to the box). And as the lid seems very heavy, I will help you.

(They lift the lid. *Hope*, with her rainbow wings, comes forth. She lays her hand on *Epimetheus*, and kisses *Pandora* on the forehead, healing them.)

Pandora. Who are you, beautiful creature?

Hope. I am Hope! And because of my cheerfulness I was put into the box, to make amends to the human race for the swarm of ugly Troubles which was destined to be let loose on the earth. Never fear! We will be happy in spite of them all.

Pandora. Your wings are colored like the rainbow. They are very beautiful.

Hope. They are like the rainbow, because, though my spirit is cheerful, I am made partly of smiles, partly of tears.

Epimetheus. And will you stay with us forever and ever?

Hope. As long as you need me, and that will be as long as you live on the earth, I promise never to desert you. Often when perhaps you least dream of it, you shall see the glimmer of my wings in your cottage. Yes, indeed, and I know something very precious that is to be given to Man hereafter.

Pandora. Oh, tell us what it is!

Hope (putting her finger on her lip). Do not ask me; but do not despair if it should never happen while you live on this earth. Trust in my promise, for it is true.

DAPHNE

CHARACTERS: Apollo, Cupid, Pencus; Venus, Daphne

SCENE I

(Cupid is playing with his bow and arrows on Parnassus. Apollo bids him leave such weapons for stronger hands.)

Apollo. I wonder that Venus gave her son such a warlike plaything. It is unsuited to hands so soft as yours.

Cupid. Yet I have a good aim, and many have suffered from my wounds.

Apollo. Gather roses, and weave them into garlands, taking care that the thorns prick not your tender fingers. That would be fitter employment for you than shooting those little arrows.

Cupid. Little they may be, yet my arrows can sting.

Apollo. What could your arrows avail against the Python? Huge was the monster which lived in the slime and hid in the caves of Parnassus; yet I slew the ruddy-faced serpent, here on the heights of Parnassus, with a thousand arrows. Lay aside the childish bow and arrows. Content yourself with the torch

which Venus gave you. Leave warlike weapons for those who know how to use them.

Cupid. Let your bow shoot all things, Phœbus; my bow shall shoot you; and as much as all animals fall short of you, so much is your glory less than mine. Know that my quiver contains two kinds of arrows, those which awaken love and those which repel. Of this ere long you shall have proof.

SCENE II

(Cupid is on a rock of Parnassus with Venus. He draws a blunt arrow from his quiver.)

Venus. What will you do, my son, with the blunt, leaden-tipped arrow?

Cupid (fitting the arrow into his bow). Apollo says I have no right to use his weapons, the bow and arrow. He bids me lay them aside and play with flowers. I will be revenged on him.

Venus. Has Apollo ever felt your dart?

Cupid. No; but he shall do so ere the day ends.

Venus. I see. You will pierce him with a golden arrow to awaken love, and strike with a leaden shaft her whom he loves, to awaken disgust.

Cupid. Is it not a sweet revenge?

Venus. Sweet indeed! Who is the maid?

Cupid. Daphne, daughter of Peneus, the river god. As soon as the leaden arrow strikes her, she shall detest the very name of love, and shall fly from all lovers. Then a golden arrow from my quiver shall pierce Phæbus to the marrow, and he shall be seized with love for the maiden. So will I teach Phæbus to fear my arrows, small as they are.

Venus. It is a fitting revenge, truly, and worthy of my son Cupid.

SCENE III

(The river bank.)

Daphne. Urge me no more, my father. I abhor even the name of love, and none of my suitors please me.

Peneus. Yet, Daphne, hear reasonable words, and do not be guilty of folly.

Daphne. I care only for hunting; I care not for lovers.

Peneus. Listen to the voice of Peneus, your father, who loves you and would teach you wisdom. Now, in the springtime of youth, suitors are indeed plenty, but you despise them all. Running alone in the deep woods, with disordered dress and careless mien, you look upon all mankind with scorn and contempt. Soon your suitors will grow cold, and in the wintry

days you will be left alone, forlorn. Repent ere it is too late, and be kind as other maidens are.

Daphne. The maiden I would pattern after was not such as you would have me.

Peneus. What maiden do you seek to imitate?

Daphne. Diana, the huntress.

Peneus. Foolish one! too late you will see your mistake.

Daphne (beseechingly). Dear father, grant me this favor, I entreat you, that I may always remain unmarried like Diana.

Peneus. I consent, yet your own face will forbid it.

SCENE IV

(A meadow. *Apollo*, in love with *Daphne*, pursues her everywhere. She shuns him.)

Apollo. Where is the cruel Daphne, who continually flees from me? I would give all the world for a kind word from her, but she will not give it. Even now she comes this way, yet she will not deign to give me a look or a word.

(Daphne runs by swiftly, her hair hanging loose on her shoulders. Apollo follows, hoping to detain her.)

Stay, daughter of Peneus; I am not a foe. Do not fly from me as the lamb flies from the wolf. You make me miserable, for fear you should fall and hurt yourself on these stones, and I should be the cause. Pray, run slower, and I will follow slower.

(Daphne runs off. Apollo continues speaking to the empty air.)

I am no clown, no rude peasant. Jupiter is my father. I am Apollo, god of song and of the lyre. My arrows fly true to the mark; but alas! an arrow more fatal than mine has pierced my heart! I am the god of medicine, and know the virtues of all healing plants; yet I suffer a malady that no balm can cure!

SCENE V

(Daphne, fearing that Apollo is about to overtake her, calls to Peneus for aid. He changes her to a laurel tree.)

Daphne (running in haste, looking back fearfully as if pursued). Apollo, the hateful pursuer, gains upon me! My strength fails. I can go no farther. Help me, Peneus, my sire! Open the earth to inclose me, or change my form. Quick! before he comes. (Daphne goes out.)

Peneus (invisible). Fear not, Daphne. I will save you.

(After a moment Apollo appears.)

Apollo. Daphne is lost to me forever. Overcome by fear, she called to Peneus to save her from me. Scarcely had she spoken, when a stiffness seized all her limbs. Her body was inclosed in a tender bark; her hair became leaves; her arms became

branches; her feet became fixed in the ground as roots; her face became a tree top, unlike its former self in all but beauty. Then I spoke these words: "O Daphne, since you cannot be my wife, you shall be my tree. I will wear you for my crown. With you I will decorate my harp and quiver; when the great Roman conquerors go in triumph to the Capitol, you shall be woven into wreaths for their brows. And as eternal youth is mine, your leaf shall be always green and know no decay." These words I spoke to the tree, and it bowed its head in thanks.



THE TRANSFORMATION OF IO

CHARACTERS: Jupiter, Mercury, Argus; Juno

SCENE I

(Jupiter and his wife, Juno, are standing together on a river bank.)

Juno. Look, Jupiter! see that beautiful heifer. I never saw a finer one. Whose can it be? I wonder to see it here alone, so far from its companions of the herd.

Jupiter. It may well be beautiful, for it is newly created from the earth.

Juno. Give it to me for my own. I will take excellent care of it and keep it always fresh and fair. It would be a pity that so fine an animal should be yoked to the plow.

Jupiter. It is yours. Do with it as you please.

Juno. It shall roam at will in a fertile meadow full of juicy grass and springing flowers; and, to be sure that no harm comes to it, I will call Argus, with his hundred eyes, to be its keeper. He is an excellent guardian. When he goes to sleep, only two eyes are closed, and he can watch with all the others.

Jupiter. Choose your pasture and keeper as you will. The heifer is yours.

Juno. I thank you truly for the gift.

SCENE II

(Mount Olympus. Jupiter sends Mercury to put Argus to death.)

Jupiter. Know, O Mercury, that I lately changed Io, daughter of the river god Inachus, into a heifer, to protect her from the enmity of Juno, for Juno is ever jealous and miserable if I speak to another being besides herself. She has set Argus, the hundred-eyed, to guard the beautiful heifer. Argus watches Io as she feeds through the day, and at night keeps her prisoner with a vile rope round her neck. She is unhappy. One day her father and sisters came near. She went to them and suffered them to touch her, and heard them admire her beauty. She longed to make herself known to them, but voice and words were wanting.

Mercury. I can but pity the maiden.

Jupiter. Listen! Her father reached her a tuft of grass, and she licked the outstretched hand. At length she bethought herself of writing, and traced her name—it was a short one—on the sand with her hoof. Inachus read the name, and discovering that his lost daughter was hidden under this disguise,

clasped her white neck, saying to her, "Alas! my daughter, it would have been a less grief to lose you altogether." While her father thus spoke, Argus, observing, came and drove her away, and took his seat on a rock, from which he could see in every direction. So the hateful keeper watches continually. Do you guess what I require of you?

Mercury. That is not difficult. You wish the hundred eyes to be closed forever.

Jupiter. Your nimble wit could have guessed a harder riddle than that. Go on your errand at once.

Mercury. I will take my sleep-producing wand and, laying aside my winged sandals and cap, will present myself to Argus as a simple shepherd. I will play upon my pipes, and perhaps Argus will fall asleep before I have done.

Jupiter. Success shall be yours.

SCENE III

(Argus is sitting on a stone, when Mercury appears in the form of a shepherd, playing upon his pipes.)

Argus. Who are you, and whence do you come? Mercury. I am a simple shepherd, master; while my flock feed in the valley, I wander about, playing to myself.

Argus. Young man, come and sit by me on this stone. There is no better country for flocks than this, and here is a pleasant shade in which to rest.

Mercury. I will sit by you willingly, if you'do not tire of the sound of my pipes.

Argus. I shall never tire of your music. It is the sweetest I ever heard.

Mercury. Are you too a shepherd?

Argus. I do not watch sheep. Instead of herds, I have only a single heifer to guard.

Mercury. That must be a light task when you have so many eyes.

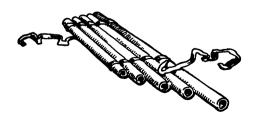
Argus. You may well say so. I sit here on the mountain top all the day, and with my hundred eyes I can see everywhere without turning my head.

Mercury. That is easy watching, indeed. For myself, I have but two eyes in my head, and while I look for lost sheep, the others stray in all directions before I can prevent them. Two eyes are not enough for a man who would tend sheep.

Argus. Tell me, shepherd, the name of the instrument on which you make such sweet music. I never heard it before.

Mercury. It is called the syrinx, and I will tell you why. In the cold mountains of Arcadia once dwelt a nymph named Syrinx, much beloved by the spirits of the wood. She was a faithful worshiper

of Diana, and followed the chase. You would have thought it was Diana herself, had you seen her in her hunting dress, only that her bow was of cornel wood, and Diana's of gold. One day the god Pan spied her, returning from the chase, and wooed her with honeyed words. The nymph, slighting his suit, fled through pathless woods until she came to the gentle stream of sandy Ladon. Here the waters stopped her flight, and she called upon the nymphs for help. They heard her prayer and answered it. Pan, bending forward to embrace her, found only a tuft of reeds within his arms. As he breathed a sigh, the air sounded through the reeds in a plaintive melody. The god, charmed with the sweetness of the music, said, "Thus at least you shall be mine." Then he took some of the reeds, of unequal lengths, and, placing them side by side, made an instrument which he called the syrinx, in honor of the nymph. Is it not a pretty tale, Argus? (Pause) He does not answer. The hundred eyes are all asleep. Now is the time to fulfill Jupiter's command.



SCENE IV

(Mount Olympus. *Juno*, incensed at the death of *Argus*, has persecuted *Io* until now *Jupiter* pleads for her.)

Jupiter. Forget now, O Juno, your wrath against Io, daughter of Inachus. Long has she suffered at your hands.

Juno. And justly she has suffered. For her, Argus, my faithful keeper, was slain, his hundred eyes closed in darkness forever by your command.

Jupiter. Argus is honored in death.

Juno. True, his hundred eyes shine forth in the proud beauty of my peacock, preserved by my careful hand. Yet the beauty of the bird's plumes cannot bring Argus back to life.

Jupiter. Then your wakeful vengeance sent the gadfly to torment Io, and she fled from it over the whole world. She went through that sea which shall henceforth be called for her the Ionian Sea, and through the Bosporus, the cow ford. By these names the fate of Io shall live in the memory of man. On through Scythia she went, and came at last to the banks of the Nile.

Juno. I pity not her wanderings.

Jupiter. Leaving home and kindred, she went at your pleasure through many a strange, wild land, suffering many things.

Juno. Yet my punishment is as great as hers, for I have lost Argus.

Jupiter. Think of the buzzing torment ever at her ear, to tease and sting! It was to escape this great affliction that she roamed so far in frenzy. Who knows what maddening thoughts too you fixed in her breast, to torture her.

Juno. Let her take heed how she offends Juno again.

Jupiter. All things have an end, and let now her cruel sufferings have their end. Let the past die, nor be fearful of the future. I will speak no more with the maid, neither see her more.

Juno. I care not for the maid. Let her resume her proper shape and return to her kindred.

Jupiter. They have mourned long for her, as for one lost forever.

Juno. The greater will be their joy at her return. Jupiter. What is done cannot be undone. It was decreed that Io should suffer your vengeance and that Argus should die. Now, her wanderings ended, Io shall be a nymph once more, with all the beauty that is hers by right; and in years to come, the Egyptians shall honor her as a goddess. Great shall be the fame of Io.

LATONA AND THE RUSTICS

CHARACTERS: First Countryman, Second Countryman, Third Countryman, Fourth Countryman; Latona

SCENE I

(A pool in Lycia. Latona comes to the pool, carrying her two babes, Apollo and Diana.)

Latona. Here and there I wander, seeking rest and finding none. From Delos I come, fleeing from land to land, bearing my two children, Apollo and Diana. Now under the burning sun of Lycia, I faint with thirst, and must drink before I can go farther. From yonder hill I beheld with joy this lake of clear water. Here I will slake my thirst. Kind husbandmen, I come to drink at this pool, beside which you gather willows and osiers.

First Countryman. Nay, you cannot drink of this water. It is our lake, and we forbid you.

Latona (kneeling to drink). Surely you will not refuse me. A great and exceeding thirst is upon me, and your lake is large.

First Countryman. I tell you again, you may not drink here. We suffer no stranger to drink of this water.

Latona. You think I would steal your bulrushes and the osiers which you gather. Have no fear; I will not touch them. I wish but to drink.

Second Countryman. Nevertheless, you cannot drink.

Latona. Do you indeed deny me? Why do you refuse what you have in such abundance? The use of water is common to all. Nature has made neither sun nor air nor running streams the property of any man. To nature's bounty have I come, to take my share of the common blessing; yet I humbly ask it of you as a favor. I will not harm your waters. I wish not to bathe, but only to drink. My mouth is parched with thirst, so that my voice falters. A draft of cool water is all I ask. It will be nectar to me, and will save my life.

Third Countryman. You ask in vain.

Latona. See how these little ones, my babes, stretch forth their arms, begging for water!

Fourth Countryman. Know, vain pleader, that we are tired of your complaining. You cannot drink, and unless you leave this lake you may be roughly used. Take yourself and your babes to some other place.

Latona. What have I done, that you should deny me so simple a boon?

Second Countryman. If it is our will to keep our lake to ourselves, that is enough.

First Countryman. It will be worse for you if you tarry longer. Our patience is well-nigh gone.

Latona. Now I know that you but jest, for no men could be so unfeeling as you seem to be. I wait no longer, but kneeling here, I drink.

Third Countryman. Obstinate one, you shall be prevented. We will run into the water and jump about, stirring the mud with our feet. (To his companions) Quick, ere she drinks! Now, foolish woman, what say you? Would you still drink? The water is thick and brown, a tempting draft, truly. Why do you not drink?

Second Countryman. And yet she was consumed with thirst!

Fourth Countryman. Once more, stir the mud, that it settle not too quickly. Run to and fro.

Latona. Inhuman monsters, more cruel than beasts! As for my thirst, you have taught me to forget it in anger. (Lifting her hand, and looking upward) O Jupiter, beholder of my wanderings with these helpless ones, avenge this last insult that Latona endures! Grant that these wicked men who defile the water may pass their lives within its depths. Make them small and mean. Give them ugly faces, green backs, bloated throats, and mouths stretched

with constant railing. Give them harsh voices, that croak but never speak in human language. Let them dive and jump, but live here in the slimy pool.—He hears my prayer. The cruel men stoop and shrink before my eyes. They receive their doom. I thank thee, Jupiter!



PHAËTHON

CHARACTERS: Phæbus, Phæthon, Jupiter, Mercury, Vulcan; Earth

SCENE I

(The palace of the sun in India. *Phaëthon*, son of *Phæbus Apollo*, who drives the chariot of the sun, has gone to his father's palace to ask a boon. *Phæbus*, arrayed in purple, sits on a throne sparkling with emeralds. Near the throne are the Hours, the Days, the Months, the Years, and the Ages. Spring too stands near, wearing a wreath of flowers, with Summer, whose garland is made of ears of corn. Autumn is smeared with juice of the grape, and icy Winter is crowned with his long white hair.)

Phæbus. What dost thou seek, Phaëthon, in this thy father's palace? Be not afraid of the splendor of my throne. Come nearer.

Phaëthon (shading his eyes). O Apollo, my father, my eyes are blinded by the rays that shine about thy head.

Phæbus (taking off the circle of brilliant rays that surround his head). Come nearer, Phaëthon, and let me embrace thee. What dost thou desire? Ask what thou wilt, and it shall be given thee.

Phaëthon. Give me this boon, my father. Let me, I pray thee, guide thy fiery chariot for one day's journey through the sky. Phæbus (shaking his head). Too rash was my promise. How can I grant a gift so dangerous? Thou art but a mortal. Thy years are few, and thy strength is slight, yet thou askest what is denied even to the gods. None but Phæbus can stand upon the fiery axletree and guide the chariot, not even Jupiter himself. Steep and difficult is the first part of the way; hardly can the horses climb it, even in their morning strength.

Phaëthon. I will urge them with my voice and with the singing lash.

Phæbus. In the middle of the heavens the course is high, and he who drives trembles with fear as he looks down upon the sea and earth so far below. The downward course is a steep descent and requires a sure command of the horses. The Ocean, watching below to receive me in her waves, is wont to fear lest I should fall headlong from above.

Phaëthon. My head is strong, and my heart is steadfast. I should not fear.

Phæbus. The heavens are carried round with a constant rotation, and bear with them the lofty stars, whirling them in rapid motion. Against this I must contend. That force which overcomes all other things does not overcome me, and I am borne in a direction contrary to the rapid world. What couldst thou do if I gave thee the chariot? Would not the whirling heavens carry thee away?

Phaëthon. Surely the horses know the way. I would urge them mightily, and control them with bit and rein.

Phæbus. Dost fancy that the way lies through groves and cities of the gods, wherein are stately temples enriched with gifts? Instead, the way is beset with dangers on every hand. Thou must pass close by the horns of the threatening Bull and before the raging Lion, the cruel Scorpion, and the Crab.

Phaëthon. I shall not fear them.

Phæbus. The steeds which thou must drive carry fire in their breasts, and breathe it forth from mouth and nostrils. Hardly can I restrain them when their high mettle is roused and they struggle against the rein. My heart is troubled at the danger thou wouldst tempt. Thou askest a punishment, not a gift. If thou dost still urge thy rash demand, it shall be granted, for I have sworn it by the Styx. But for the last time I entreat thee, ask a less dangerous plaything than my chariot of day drawn by the fiery steeds. Look upon the rich world; ask for any precious thing it contains, and it is thine. Surely it is better to choose a blessing than a curse.

Phaëthon. The blood of the father flows in the son, and tempts him to high endeavors. If I fail, I fail; I will at least strive nobly.

Phæbus. Come then, if thou wilt not be turned aside from thy rashness; follow me to the chariot.

SCENE II

(Phæbus has led Phaëthon to the chariot of day.)

Phaëthon. See the splendid chariot! Now, more than ever, my heart burns to follow thy course through the heavens, if but for a day.

Phæbus. Vulcan made the chariot and gave it to me. The axletree and poles are of gold; the rim of each wheel is gold; the spokes are silver.

Phaëthon. How the light flashes from the gems on the yoke! And look! Aurora has opened her purple doors in the ruddy east, and shows her halls full of roses. The horns of the far-distant moon grow dim. The earth reddens. Now the swift Hours yoke the horses to the chariot. I must take the reins and begin my glorious way.

Phæbus. Let me touch thy face with this powerful ointment, that thou mayst be able to endure the burning flames. I place the rays upon thy head, and pray that all may be well. Be sparing of the whip and hold a tight rein. The fiery steeds hasten on of their own will; the labor is to hold them in. Follow the track of the wheels, and, that Heaven and Earth may receive equal heat, drive neither too high nor too low. Night is passing out of the western gates, and we can no longer delay. Take the reins, unless at the last moment

thou wilt be wise and suffer me to continue to light and warm the earth.

Phaëthon. I take the reins, and give thanks, eternal thanks, for the glory lent me for one day.

(Phaëthon is borne off in the chariot by the impatient horses. Phæbus watches his flight.)

Phæbus. Unhappy youth! he knows not what he undertakes. Here must I stand and watch his perilous course. See! the chariot, without its accustomed weight, swings from side to side. The steeds rush headlong and leave the traveled road. Phaëthon! Phaëthon! tighten the rein! It is the only hope. As well shout to the tumbling billows and expect them to obey! Now he is close to the Scorpion. What thinks Phaëthon of the poisonous monster, menacing with his arms and tail and crooked claws? Surely the reins must have fallen from Phaëthon's hands. The horses follow their own will, now among the stars, now down almost to earth again. They drag the chariot into unknown regions of the sky, over pathless places never visited before. The clouds begin to smoke. The mountain tops take fire. The fields are parched, the plants wither, the harvest is ablaze! Great cities burn with their walls and towers! The world is on fire! The end of all things is near!

SCENE III

(Earth lifts her head above the waters and, screening her face with her hand, looks up to heaven and calls on Jupiter.)

Earth. O ruler of the gods, if I have deserved this treatment, why withhold the thunderbolts? If it is thy will that I perish by fire, let me at least fall by Jupiter's hand. Is this the reward of my fertility, my obedient service? Is it for this that I have supplied herbage for cattle, and fruits for men? What has the Ocean done to deserve such a fate? The waters shrink. Sea and Earth will perish together. If we cannot excite thy pity, think of the danger that threatens Heaven! The poles which sustain Jove's palace are smoking; if they are destroyed, the palace must fall. Atlas faints and with difficulty sustains his burden. O Jupiter, save us from the devouring flame! Deliver us! Save us!

Jupiter. Listen, all ye gods, to Earth's complaints. Bear witness that unless I give my aid, Earth, Sea, and Heaven will perish. Phœbus, unhappy father of a rash, misguided son, see to what he has brought us! Bear witness that unless I stop his career, nothing can save us from total ruin. Neither clouds nor showers remain. I cannot send the kindly rain to stop the spreading fires, yet I can send my thunder-bolt against the evildoer. Behold! the lightning



PHAËTHON

strikes Phaëthon; the flame consumes his yellow hair, and he falls like a shooting star, down to the river Eridanus, which receives him.

SCENE IV

(Mount Olympus. *Phæbus Apollo*, dressed in squalid garb, gives himself up to grief for the loss of his son.)

Phæbus. It was not enough to lose Phaëthon, the bright, unconquered boy! My daughters, too, have been taken from me. As sisters should, they mourned their brother's death, weeping and beating the breast. At length one finds her feet grown stiff. Another finds herself rooted to the ground. A third, as she tears her hair, tears off leaves. Their arms become branches. Bark closes upon them and seals their mouths, even as they say, "Farewell." But still they weep, tears of amber distilling from the newly formed branches of the poplar trees which were once my daughters. And now I am tired of life and its labors. Let another drive my chariot that carries the light. If no one else will attempt it, let Jupiter himself drive it. Then he will know, having felt the strength of the flame-footed steeds, that he who could not guide them did not deserve death. If he did not succeed, he failed nobly in a great attempt.

¹ The River Po was called Eridanus by the ancients. Amber, supposed to be the tears of the nymphs, is found upon its banks.

Mercury. Do not punish with darkness earth that has already suffered so much.

Vulcan. It is thy task to drive the chariot, in grief or in joy.

Jupiter. I hurled my lightnings to save heaven and earth from doom; there was no other way. Thou canst not weakly desert thy post and give it to another, to spend thy life in complaints. The gods do not so. Call thy steeds once more, and take thy accustomed round. If thou art disobedient, know that I have other thunderbolts still, for him who needs them.

Phæbus. My murderous steeds shall feel the lash, and repent the hour when they dashed wildly from the beaten track, dragging Phaëthon to his doom. Phaëthon! Phaëthon! thy father mourns for thee! Would that thou hadst asked some other boon, Phaëthon, my son!



MIDAS AND BACCHUS

CHARACTERS: Midas, Silenus, Bacchus, Slave; Daughter of Midas

SCENE I

(Bacchus is sitting beneath a tree. Midas appears, leading Silenus, tutor and friend of Bacchus.)

Midas. Here, by what thou saidst, we should find thy friends. They cannot be far away. 'T were best to call.

Silenus. Ho, Bacchus! 't is Silenus returned.

(Bacchus enters. Silenus hastens to him. They embrace.)

Bacchus. All thanks be his who brought thee hither, Silenus. Too long hast thou strayed. I have feared lest evil chance had led thee into danger.

Silenus. 'T is my most kind host, who showed me the homeward path. When I wandered away, Phrygian peasants found me and led me to their king, Midas. This is he. Ten days I feasted and made merry with him; then he brought me safely here.

Bacchus. King Midas, name thy wish, and see how Bacchus rewards those who serve his friends. Dear is this old man to me, and but for thy watchful care, grievous harm might have befallen him. Silenus. Truly he was a brave host and cared for me royally. Ask, Midas, what thou wilt, and Bacchus shall give it thee.

Midas. If for Bacchus to grant be as easy as for me to ask, then will I boldly speak my dearest wish. I would have gold, and always more gold. Can a king have enough treasure? Grant that all I touch may turn to gold beneath my fingers.

Bacchus (hesitating, with downcast eyes). Think again. Hast thou no better boon to ask?

Midas. What better boon could be asked or granted? With gold all man's wants are satisfied. When yellow gold comes at my touch, I can have no other wish.

Bacchus. Have thy wish; yet it shall bring thee no joy.

Midas. All joys are mine, kind Bacchus! How can I thank thee? (Midas hastens out.)

Bacchus. Now shall Midas know misery indeed! Silenus, I fear thou hast brought bitter calamity to Midas.

Silenus. If the fool asked amiss, am I to blame? Give him his fill of his darling gold. Perchance he will grow wiser by the lesson. (Silenus throws his arm over the shoulder of Bacchus, and they go out together.)

SCENE II

(Midas stands before his house.)

Midas. Now to see whether Bacchus is all powerful. I asked that whatever I touched should turn to gold. Can such a boon be granted? (He touches a twig and looks at it, then smiles with delight. He takes up a stone and looks at it, turning it over. He touches the ground and looks at it with rapture.) Now will I worship Bacchus, and praise him above all other gods, above Jupiter himself. Gold! shining gold! All turns to gold beneath my touch. (He takes an apple in his hand.) Were the golden apples of Hesperides fairer than this? What Hercules toiled for is mine at a touch. O rare, beautiful gold! I thank thee, Bacchus, for thy matchless gift!

(A slave enters.)

Slave. What does King Midas command?

Midas. Bring water, that I may wash my hands. (The slave brings a basin of water. As Midas washes his hands, he lets the water trickle through his fingers.) Seest thou? Had man ever before such bright golden water in which to bathe? (The slave draws back in terror.) Fear not. I have had brave company to-day. Wonderful things have happened. Midas shall never want for gold or aught else. But now I hunger and thirst. Bring bread and wine, for I have traveled far and am faint.

Slave. Ere thou canst finish speaking, food shall be ready to thy hand. (The slave goes out, and quickly returns with bread and wine.)

Midas. Pour wine. (The slave pours. Midas lifts the cup. He tastes, and sets it down immediately, with disgust.) What is this tasteless, frozen draft thou bringst me? Dost play thy master a trick? I asked for wine.

Slave (kneeling). Bacchus himself knows no purer wine than the draft I poured for thee.

Midas (tasting again, showing the same disappointment as before, then smiting his head as the truth dawns upon him). Can a man drink gold? Give me water. Haply that will keep its nature, though the wine turns to gold at my poisonous touch. (The slave brings water. Midas tastes.) So! Midas is to drink no more! Give me bread! (Midas takes a piece, looks at it, and throws it down.) Let me not handle it. Feed me like a child, and pray the gods that it choke me not with golden grains, else I perish with hunger and thirst. (The slave offers bread to the lips of Midas, who tastes, then dashes it to the ground in frenzy.) Now may all the gold that was ever mined be ground under foot of man! May it be blotted from the earth! So Bacchus, granting my boon, mocked me, and now laughs at my distress. I would give a mountain of solid gold for one draft of cool water.

(The door opens, and a maiden enters. She hastens to Midas.)

Maiden. Father!

Midas. O my daughter! A cruel doom has fallen on me. See! (He touches bread and wine.) All tasteless, worthless gold! I asked Bacchus that whatever I touched might turn to gold, and he gave what it had been kinder to withhold. I starve in the midst of plenty. Touch me not, dearest, lest thou share my doom. (The maiden touches her father's forehead. Midas starts back with a cry; he takes the maiden's hand and looks at it. She stands rigid and silent; her hand drops to her side.) Bacchus, be merciful! (Midas goes out, covering his eyes with his hand.)

SCENE III

(Bacchus and Silenus are talking together beneath the trees.)

Silenus. I tell thee, Bacchus, I like not that Midas should suffer because he befriended me.

Bacchus. He chose freely. I warned him, yet he remained firm in the evil choice. It is just that he should suffer.

Silenus. Is there no hope? Must he starve in the midst of his gold?

Bacchus. Who shall say that aught is impossible?
(Midas appears.)

Midas (kneeling). Bacchus, a miserable man asks a boon.

Bacchus. What wouldst thou, Midas?

Midas. Take back thy gold, and give me my daughter, living, speaking, and smiling again. The curse of my touch is on her. She is a golden statue without life or motion.

Bacchus. Think what thou desirest,—to lose the golden touch, to be as other men are, to give up thy new-found wealth forever.

Midas. Whom the gods would teach, them they afflict, and grievously torment. I have suffered, and I am wise. Take back the gold; restore the maiden.

Silenus. Now is Bacchus harder than his gold, if he heed not thy prayer!

Midas. Take back the deadly gift I asked. I loathe the thought of gold. I die of hunger.

Bacchus. I warned thee, but men have little liking for the counsel of the gods. They prefer to be taught by their own misfortune rather than by the voice of wisdom. Yet learn that Bacchus can be merciful. Go to the city of Sardis, where flows the river Pactolus. Follow its waters to the source of the stream. There plunge thy head beneath the bubbling spring, and thy soul shall be purged of its crime, and thy hands shall be clean. The golden virtue, departing from thy body into the stream, shall tinge its waters, and the sands shall be rich with a vein of gold.

Midas. I thanked thee for the gift of the golden touch; I thank thee yet more for removing it. (Midas goes out.)

Silenus. 'T is a pity that mortals know not what to ask, when the gods shower gifts.

Bacchus. If mortals were always wise, the gods might learn of them.



MIDAS AND APOLLO

CHARACTERS: Midas, Pan, Apollo, Shepherds, Tmolus, Hairdresser; Hairdresser's Wife

SCENE I

(A meadow. *Tmolus*, the mountain god, is made umpire in a musical contest between *Pan* and *Apollo*.)

Midas. Gentle Pan, I ask no sweeter life than to dwell with you,—to live a shepherd's life in the valleys and on the hills; or, if the sun burns too fiercely, there are cool grottoes where one may sleep the sultry noon away.

Pan. There is no gold in the meadows, Midas, save what the yellow crocus wears.

Midas. Therefore I love them, since I hate all thought of wealth.

Pan. Men have held you for a lover of gold.

Midas. Laugh your fill, my master, whom I worship. Your laughter harms me not; if it pleases you, continue without stint.

Pan. I would I had seen you with your gold piled about you, praying Bacchus to make you poor again.

Midas. That was a prayer that came from the heart, truly. But we waste time with words. My ears thirst for the music of your pipes.

Pan. You shall hear it presently. Know that I have challenged Phœbus Apollo to a contest of music. Tmolus, the mountain god, is to be umpire, and I will so delight him with my playing, that Apollo, god of music though he is, shall be put to confusion. Will you hear the contest?

Midas. I will hear it gladly, though I care not for Apollo's part in it. I delight in the merry pipes, but care not for the lyre.

Pan. Let not Apollo hear you say so, or he will punish you. Here comes Apollo, and Tmolus sits on his mountain, listening. See, he has moved the trees from his ears, the better to hear!

(Apollo comes, wearing a purple robe and a wreath of laurel. Shepherds and nymphs follow.)

First Shepherd. 'T will be a brave contest, I doubt not. Never before have I heard so much music.

Second Shepherd. If we live to tell the tale, it will be worth the telling.

Third Shepherd. And why should we not live to tell the tale, master? Tell me that.

Second Shepherd. My legs fail me before so much divinity, and I care not who knows it. I had liefer run away.

First Shepherd. He that runs away is no lover of music and no true man. A shepherd that does not love music is like a cow without horns.

Second Shepherd. Our Father Pan is a comfortable god; a man may stand before him without losing his eyesight. But when I look at Phœbus, I must shade my eyes, and I seem to shrivel up as small as an acorn. He is a dangerous god for common men.

Third Shepherd. Hush! the contest begins. Let not Phœbus hear you chattering.

(Pan blows upon the pipes a rustic melody. The listeners applaud loudly, especially Midas.)

Midas. Oh, well played, Pan! A most sweet melody! You heard it, shepherds. Was it not sweet? First Shepherd. Hush! Apollo rises!

(Apollo rises in majesty, and plays on the lyre strains of divine harmony. The listeners are entranced.)

Tmolus. The victory is Apollo's.

First Shepherd. No man can doubt that.

Second Shepherd. I would not if I could. That is to say, no man in his senses can doubt it. There is something in that lyre that goes to the head like strong wine, and makes a man's tongue unsteady.

Third Shepherd. Oh, the divine lyre! Did not your heart ache when it ceased? I could listen forever!

Midas. I go not with the crowd; I question the decision. Pan's notes were merrier and sweeter. To Pan belongs the prize.

Apollo. Shepherds, return to your homes. Midas, remain. I have somewhat to say to you when Pan has left us. (The audience disperse in alarm and confusion. Midas stands with downcast eyes.) I do not question the honesty of your judgment, but pity the dull hearing which nature has given you. In proof of my words I will give you a better pair of ears with which to enjoy music. They shall be large and ample, that nothing may escape them; cunningly clothed with hairs within and without; and, as a crowning merit, they shall turn easily in all directions. Look in the next pool you pass, and admire the ornament that Apollo bestows upon you. (Apollo leaves Midas alone.)

Midas (touching his ears). Why, these are asses' ears! (He moves them about.) I was a fool for my pains. Pan will never have done laughing if he sees these ears. I must conceal them. I will wear a turban, so deep and wide that none will see what it covers. Plague on the hairdresser! He must know the secret, but I will threaten him with dire punishment if he tells it to any human being. He will not dare to disobey.



MIDAS AND APOLLO

SCENE II

(Midas has visited the hairdresser.)

Hairdresser. Such a monstrous secret! And to be commanded never to tell it, on pain of death! Not even to my wife! That is unkind to her and to me, for she would have as much joy in hearing as I should in telling. I know not what right men have to lay such hard commands upon us. It is a great question whether they should be obeyed. But I like my life well enough, too, — as well as any man. He said he would cut off my ears first and then take my life. Hist! (He stops in fright and touches his ears to see if they are safe.) I almost told it unawares. I think I shall tell it in my sleep sometime, and then my wife will tell it, and Midas — hush! — and some one will know that I have told. Then it will be all over with me.

I know a way. I will go into the meadow and dig a hole in the ground,—deep, it shall be deep. And there I will whisper the story into the hole, and then cover it up again. I will not answer for my tongue otherwise, so fiercely does it demand to tell. It will mutiny, and I cannot control it. It will tell without judgment, and I shall lose—(He checks himself and pats his ears.) The meadow is the safer way; I will to the meadow.

What to say if any see me and ask what I do! I will say I am under a vow to kiss Mother Earth.

A man may kiss his mother, and none may ask him why, or say he is telling secrets. To the meadow, as soon as darkness comes on a little! I will wait for the darkness.

SCENE III

(A thick growth of reeds has sprung up where the hairdresser buried his secret. The hairdresser by chance walks that way with his wife.)

Wife. I have not been this way for months, yet I remember the place well. When did you see it last?

Hairdresser (in confusion). I don't rightly remember. A man can't remember a little thing like that.

Wife. Now I look, there is something strange about it. I never noticed such a thick bed of reeds here before. Did you?

Hairdresser (trying to drag his wife forward). As if I could remember every tuft of weeds I see!

Wife. Now the breeze strikes the tall reeds, and they bend before it. Stop! what is that?

Hairdresser. What is what? Are you out of your mind?

Wife. Surely they are saying something. Listen! (The hairdresser stands rooted to the spot in horror, while his wife bends forward and listens eagerly.) I would never have thought it. They say that Midas has asses' ears!

(The hairdresser claps his hands to his ears and disappears with a shout of terror.)

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

CHARACTERS: Philemon, Jupiter, Mercury; Baucis

SCENE I

(The events take place in the home of *Philemon* and *Baucis*. It is a humble place, but neat and orderly.)

Philemon. Pleasant it is, at the end of day, to sit at rest in the peaceful home. The sun's rays are fierce in the garden, Baucis, at noontime.

Baucis. And that same fierce heat is purpling the grapes, Philemon. They ripen fast.

(The noise of shouts outside is heard, growing louder.)

Philemon. Ah, wife, I fear some poor traveler has lost his way, and our rude neighbors, instead of giving him food and shelter, have set their dogs on him.

Baucis. I wish our neighbors were more hospitable. The children throw stones at strangers, and the parents praise them for doing so.

Philemon. Those children will be heartless, unkind men and women by and by. To tell the truth, wife, I should not wonder if some terrible thing were to happen to all the people of the village, unless they mend their manners. But as for you and me, as long as we have a crust of bread, let us be ready to share it with any stranger that may need it.

Baucis. We would rather go without our dinner than refuse bread to a hungry traveler. The rights of the stranger are sacred.

(The noise increases.)

Philemon. Listen to the dogs! I never heard them so loud before.

Baucis. Surely the children were never so rude before. (A knock is heard.) Hark! who can that be? Go quickly, Philemon, and see who knocks.

(Philemon goes to the door; Jupiter and Mercury enter. Both are tall, and Jupiter shows great dignity, but they are dressed like ordinary travelers. Mercury carries a staff.)

Jupiter. We are weary travelers, seeking a night's lodging.

Philemon. You are welcome to this poor cottage and all that it contains.

(*Philemon* places chairs; *Baucis* prepares supper. They are very cordial and attentive to the travelers.)

Mercury. Thank you. This is a kinder greeting than the one we received in yonder village. Pray, why do you live in such a bad neighborhood?

Philemon. Perhaps we were sent here to make amends for the bad manners of our neighbors.

Mercury. Well said, good man! If the truth were told, my companion and I need some amends.

Those rude children have spattered us with mud, and one of the curs has torn my cloak, which was ragged enough before.

Jupiter. (Jupiter speaks always in a deep, solemn tone.) Was there not in former times a lake covering the spot where now the village stands?

Philemon. Not in my day, and I am an old man, as you see. There were always the fields and meadows just as they are now, and the old trees, and the little stream murmuring through the valley. Neither my father nor his father ever saw it otherwise, so far as I know, and doubtless it will still be the same when we are forgotten.

Jupiter (sternly). That is more than can be safely foretold. Since the inhabitants of the village have forgotten the affections and sympathies of their natures, it were perhaps better that the lake should be rippling over their dwellings.

Mercury. Much better. It is all they deserve.

Baucis. Will it please you to come to supper?

(Jupiter and Mercury sit at the table, with Philemon near them. Baucis stands by the table to serve.)

Philemon. It is a poor feast, but love goes with it. Baucis. Here are olives, Minerva's fruit. Here are radishes and cheese, with eggs cooked in the ashes. Philemon, pour the milk into the cups, while I bring the stew, smoking hot.

Mercury. Have you always lived in this place?

Philemon. In all my life I have never been a score of miles from this spot. My father lived in this house before me, and when I married Baucis, I brought her here.

Jupiter. Have you lived happily through these many years?

Philemon. Baucis, the stranger asks if we have lived happily together.

Baucis. The stranger has traveled far and wide, and he knows that the humblest home is happy if love dwells there.

Jupiter. That is a true saying. Fill my cup with milk once more, Philemon, and then tell me how your days have passed. (*Philemon* fills both cups.)

Philemon. We have earned our bread by honest labor, wise stranger, and have been too busy and too happy to quarrel. Our garden feeds us, and with the fine butter and cheese which Baucis makes, we have all that we need, and more. Baucis, bring purple grapes for our guests, and honey.

Mercury. Your fare is good, and contentment, your daily sauce, makes it sweeter. You must know that to thirsty travelers your cool milk is especially welcome. (He holds his cup to *Philemon*, who fills it.)

Baucis. Alas! I took half of to-day's milk for the cheese. Had I known the travelers were coming,

we would have gone hungry, that their supper might be complete.

Jupiter. Your welcome seems all the more gracious after the rude greeting we received from your neighbors who dwell by the shore. (Jupiter holds his cup to Philemon, who drains the pitcher of its last drop.)

Philemon. We should think it shame to refuse shelter and food to the wayfarer. What we have, we gladly share with those who need it.

Jupiter. And what, Philemon, is your dearest wish? What do you pray the gods for chiefly?

Philemon. That is easily answered. Because Baucis and I love each other so much, we pray night and day that when death comes, it shall not separate us, but that we may die, as we have lived, together.

Jupiter. You are a good man, and you have a good wife to be your helpmeet. You deserve that your wish should be granted.

Mercury. More of the grapes, Philemon, and fill my cup once more.

Philemon. Alas! the pitcher is empty. I drained the last drop before.

Jupiter. Yet it can do no harm to lift the pitcher once more. Perhaps you mistook.

Philemon (pouring). Truly I was wrong. A little more milk remains. I give you the last, and wish it were more.

Baucis. We give our poor best most willingly. I wish our neighbors could know the blessing of entertaining strangers.

Philemon. Well may you say so. I know not how it is, but since these travelers entered our cottage, my heart has been strangely light.

Baucis. I feel the same. A new happiness has come to bless us.

Jupiter. It is just that the good should be rewarded, and that the wicked should be punished. Fill the cup but once more, Philemon, to crown our repast.

Philemon. I crave your mercy, kind stranger, but not a drop remains.

Jupiter. Hand me the pitcher. Drink to the hospitality of good Philemon and Baucis, and to their happiness. (As he says these words, Jupiter rises and pours two full cups of milk. Jupiter and Mercury drink. Philemon and Baucis exchange looks of amazement. Jupiter fills again, and they drink the second time. Baucis plucks Philemon by the sleeve. Philemon and Baucis speak together in a low tone apart from the others.)

Baucis. Whence came the milk he poured? I tell you the pitcher was empty.

Philemon. I know that right well, for I emptied it myself.

Baucis. It is no mortal that fills brimming cups from empty pitchers. Did you not feel something high and strange about the travelers as soon as they

entered? The tall one has an eye like an eagle's, and yet he is so kind that nobody can feel afraid.

Philemon. And the other has such a merry look that he makes one forget all care. (In an awe-struck voice) They must be Jupiter and Mercury! What should we do?

Baucis. Why, we can but throw ourselves on their mercy. Speak to them, Philemon. (Philemon and Baucis kneel before Jupiter and Mercury.)

Philemon. O Celestial Powers that deign to stoop from bright Olympus to visit happy mortals, forgive, we beseech, our poor entertainment, unworthy of such guests. (Baucis and Philemon remain kneeling, with bowed heads.)

Jupiter. Who give the gods their best have naught to fear. Plenty shall crown your descending days. This humble cot in which gods have rested shall be changed to a marble temple. Here shall you dwell, priest and priestess of the temple. As in life you have been united, so death shall not divide you. When gathering years have made life a burden, the temple shall know you no more, but side by side two trees shall stand with mingling branches, and as the wind passes by, it shall breathe the names of Baucis and Philemon.

Philemon. Our lips cannot speak the gratitude that is in our hearts.

Mercury (looking down the valley). Come and see the beautiful lake that spreads through the valley. (All go and look out. *Philemon* and *Baucis* show great amazement.)

Philemon. Look! what has become of our neighbors and their homes? The broad lake covers the roads and fields, and our house is the only one left.

Baucis. Merciful Powers! what has become of our neighbors?

Mercury. I fear you will never see them again.

Jupiter. There was neither use nor beauty in such a life as theirs, for they never softened the hard lot of mortals by the exercise of kindly affections. They retained no image of the better life in their bosoms; therefore the lake that was of old has spread itself forth again to reflect the sky. As for you, good Philemon and kind Baucis, you mingled such true hospitality with your entertainment, that the milk became an inexhaustible fount, and the brown loaf and honey were ambrosia. Thus the gods feasted at your board with the same food that supplies their banquets on Olympus. You have done well. This time Justice came with swift-footed steeds. Your neighbors have their reward, and you have yours.

PROSERPINA

CHARACTERS: Pluto, Celeus, Triptolemus, Jupiter, Mercury, Attendants; Proserpina, Ceres, Metanira, Arethusa

SCENE I

(Proserpina is gathering flowers in the vale of Enna.)

Proserpina. Mother Ceres has left me alone, for she must fly over the land and bring harvest time to the waiting grain. The wheat cannot ripen without the smile of Mother Ceres. Long hours I played with the sea nymphs by the shore, but I left them to search for flowers. (She sits down and shows her apron full of flowers.) The field was full of violets. I will give them to my mother when she comes. I must go back now, for Mother Ceres told me to stay with the nymphs. (Pause. She looks at her flowers and plays with them. The noise of Pluto's chariot is heard outside.) I wonder why I feel so tired. I wish, — oh, I wish my mother would come!

(Pluto enters, richly dressed, wearing a crown.)

Pluto. What are you doing here, Proserpina?

Proserpina. I have been gathering flowers, but
I am going home now. (She gathers up the flowers in her apron.)

Pluto. I pray you, do not hasten. Do you know who I am?

Proserpina. No; but you wear a crown, so you must be a king.

Pluto. I am a king indeed,—a great and powerful king, brother of Jupiter himself.

Proserpina. What is your name?

Pluto. My name is Pluto. I have a great kingdom, and I sit on a beautiful throne, but I am lonely, for I have no queen. Will you ride beside me in my chariot with the coal-black horses, and be my queen?

Proserpina. No; I cannot leave my mother alone; I am only a little girl, you know.

Pluto. Then it will be all the easier for me to carry you to my chariot. (He takes Proserpina by the arm.)

Proserpina. Mother! Mother Ceres, come quickly, and save me!

Pluto. Do not be so frightened. In my palace are pearls and diamonds.

Proserpina (dropping the flowers). Oh, I have lost the flowers I was gathering for mother!

Pluto. You may have my crown for a plaything when we get to my palace. (He rushes off the stage, dragging *Proserpina*, who cries bitterly.)

SCENE II

(The hut of *Celeus. Metanira* is tending the sick boy, *Triptolemus*. *Celeus* enters with a basket of berries and a load of firewood. *Ceres* follows him, looking very sad. She carries an armful of poppies for *Triptolemus*.)

Celeus. Wife, I bring you a guest. I found her sitting on a stone by the roadside, beating her breast and calling her lost daughter. Long has she sat there, under the sunlight and moonlight and falling showers. "Go in peace," she said to me, "and be happy in your child; I have lost mine!" (Ceres covers her eyes with her hands.) Yet when I told her of our sick boy, Triptolemus, she despised not our humble roof, and came with me. (Ceres goes and stands by the sick child.)

Metanira. My son sickens from hour to hour. Feverish and sleepless he lies, and I can give him no relief. (Ceres touches the forehead of the sick boy, then stoops and kisses him. Celeus and Metanira watch the child with surprise and joy.) He looks better already. There is healing in your kiss.

Celeus. See how the bright color returns to his face! Surely health will come back.

Ceres. Will you trust him to me?

Metanira. Yes, gladly, for I see that you have been a mother. (Ceres takes the child in her arms. Celeus and Metanira look on with delight.)

Ceres. Bring milk, and I will mingle it with poppy juice, to make the boy sleep. When he wakes, he will be well. (Metanira brings milk. The child falls asleep after drinking. Ceres places him in his mother's arms.)

Celeus (kneeling). Whoever you are, whether mortal, like ourselves, or immortal, you have saved the child and brought joy to this humble cottage. Because you scorned not our grief, but forgot your own loss to minister to us, may your child be restored to you, safe and unharmed! Accept our thanks and prayers.

Metanira. Receive a mother's thanks!

Ceres. If Proserpina never returns to these longing arms, yet have I joy in your happiness. Triptolemus, your son, shall grow to manhood. He shall be great and full of deeds. He shall teach men the use of the plow; he shall scatter the seeds in the ground, and bear the gifts of Ceres to mankind. For me, I go to seek the lost Proserpina. Pray for me that I may find her. (Ceres goes out sadly.)

Metanira. Truly it is Mother Ceres herself! And so sad and woebegone! She forgot her own sorrow and helped us. Heaven grant she may find her lost child!

SCENE III

(The bank of a stream in Sicily. Arethusa, the nymph of the stream, is sitting on a rock. Ceres enters and walks about, speaking to herself, not seeing Arethusa.)

Ceres. All through the world I seek the lost Proserpina in vain. Bright-haired Aurora, when she comes forth in the morning, beholds my fruitless search, and when Hesperus looks down from the sky at evening, I am still wandering. (Pause) Where is my darling?

Arethusa. Unhappy goddess, have you no trace of the lost maiden, — no token by which you might follow her?

Ceres. Nothing. When I last saw her, she was gathering flowers near your stream, but I found no trace, not even a footprint.

Arethusa (showing Proserpina's girdle). I have a token here which may mean much. This girdle has been in my keeping for many a day. Does it tell you aught?

Ceres (seizing the girdle passionately, and pressing it to her heart). Proserpina's girdle! Arethusa, nymph of the sacred river, whence came this?

Arethusa. It was dropped on the surface of my stream.

Ceres. Then my darling is indeed stolen from me, whether by mortals or by the Heavenly Powers, I know not! But I will be revenged on the accursed

land that permitted the theft,—nay, on the whole wide world! I will break all the plows! The husbandman and the oxen shall die in the field! The seed shall molder in the ground, and if by chance any remain, the greedy birds shall eat it! The wheat shall wither in the early blade! Darnel and thistles shall choke the springing grain!

Arethusa. O mother of the lost virgin, and of the bounteous harvests as well, cease at length your search, and be not angered against the kindly land. Listen! my waters sink through the earth, and are carried beneath its lowest caverns. While I was thus running under the earth, along the Stygian stream, these eyes beheld Proserpina.

Ceres (wringing her hands and walking to and fro). The innocent child! the lost darling! Tell me, nymph of streams, was my daughter's face sad? Surely she could not be happy away from her mother's arms. Who stole the loved Proserpina, and carried her far from me?

Arethusa. She was indeed sad, but her look was such as becomes a queen. She sat upon a golden throne. Rich gems were in her hair, for she is the bride of Pluto, king of the realm of spirits.

Ceres. Proserpina, my darling, seized by Pluto, and carried to live forever in the gloomy underworld, far from me, far from the light of day! I cannot give

her up. I will go to Jupiter and plead night and day before his throne. Proserpina shall return, or Ceres shall never smile more. (Ceres hastens out.)

Arethusa. Now may Jupiter pity the sorrowing mother, and give her to see Proserpina's face again!

SCENE IV

(Jupiter is sitting upon his throne on Mount Olympus. Mercury stands near.)

Jupiter. What is this tale of failing harvests, and men suffering from famine?

Mercury. Ceres, the bounteous, fruitful goddess, incensed at the loss of Proserpina, withholds the harvest. The seed is blighted in the ground, or the tender blade dies while springing to light. Cold winds blow, destroying the young corn. Unconquerable weeds spring up, choking the grain.

(Ceres appears with disheveled hair. She kneels before Jupiter.)

Jupiter. Why comes Ceres, mother of harvests, in haste to Olympus?

Ceres. Behold, O Jupiter, a sorrowing mother, bereft of her child. I come to thee for justice.

Jupiter. Speak, daughter; make known thy complaint.

Ceres. In the fertile vale of Enna lies a lake embowered in woods. There, screened from the burning rays of the sun, the moist ground is covered with flowers, and Spring rules eternally. Here Proserpina, the tender maiden, was gathering flowers, when black-browed Pluto seized her and bore her in his chariot to the underworld. There he holds Proserpina for his queen, and I, mourning my darling, have no solace, neither joy in the sun nor any wish to live.

Jupiter. A piteous tale, truly! Yet, Ceres, why punish the earth for Pluto's fault? Will blighted crops and starving husbandmen bring fair Proserpina back again?

Ceres. Sire, holder of the thunderbolt, ruler of heaven and earth, bid Pluto restore my daughter. Then shall the seed grow and the harvest ripen, when the lost one comes again to the arms of Ceres.

Jupiter. Yet is her state not unworthy, for she reigns, queen of the mighty monarch Pluto, than whom only one is greater.

Ceres. I care not for Pluto and his realms, were he thrice Pluto. Give me my daughter!

Jupiter (after a pause). If it be that the maiden has not tasted food in Pluto's abode, she may return. Go, Mercury, and bring her, if while in Pluto's dominions she has suffered no food to pass her lips.

(Mercury goes out.)

Ceres. I thank thee for the boon, albeit with a hard condition. May the Fates grant her return!

SCENE V

(The scene is the palace of *Pluto*, where *Pluto* and *Proserpina* are sitting together. Two attendants stand by the door.)

Pluto. Proserpina, why grieve always for your mother? Forget her, and be happy in this palace. Have I not been kind to you? Only name a wish, and it shall be granted while you are speaking.

Proserpina. Take me to my mother. That is my wish; I have no other.

Pluto. That wish I cannot grant; I should be too lonely without you. Ask anything else in the world, and it is yours. (He shows a casket of gems.) See these gems. Are they not more beautiful than the flowers you were gathering? See how they sparkle. They are yours.

Proserpina (throwing the gems on the floor). They are not half so beautiful as violets. Oh, shall I never gather violets again? (She weeps.)

Pluto. What can I get you to eat? Since you have been in my palace you have eaten nothing. That is not right. You will starve.

Proserpina. I cannot eat the rich food you bring me. I want nothing to eat, unless it were a slice of my mother's bread, or fruit from her garden.

Pluto (to the attendants). Bring me the sweetest, most delicious fruit to be found in the whole world.

(The attendants go out.)

Proserpina. I should be hungry indeed if I waited for your servants to search through the world for the finest fruit. That would take many days.

Pluto. Not so. My servants travel at lightning speed. Try to think of something else that you wish. My dearest pleasure is to grant your desires. Wish next for a crown and throne. But they are yours without wishing, for are you not my queen? Wear the crown a little each day, and you will soon grow accustomed to it. (Pluto lifts Proserpina's crown from the table, and places it upon her head.) Now you are like a queen indeed. (An attendant enters, bearing a single pomegranate on a salver. He offers it to Proserpina.)

Proserpina. Do you bring this poor pomegranate, when you were sent for the finest fruit in the world? Search again, and do not offer me anything so poor.

Attendant. Alas! we have searched the world over. The harvests have failed. This is the only pomegranate in the world. (He places the salver on the table, and goes out.)

Pluto. Remember, Proserpina, that is the only pomegranate in all the world. Think how precious it is. See if you cannot taste it before I return. (Pluto goes out.)

Proserpina (going to the table and looking wistfully at the pomegranate). What a miserable pomegranate! It can have no more juice than a shell. Still, this is the first fruit I have seen since I came here, and I am not likely to see any more, if the harvests have failed. Unless I eat it now, it will grow still drier and be wholly spoiled. At least I may smell it. I wonder how it tastes. Perhaps it is not so very bad.

(While saying these words, she takes it up and smells it, then puts it to her lips and bites a mouthful. *Pluto* and *Mercury* enter as she does so, and *Proserpina* hastily replaces the pomegranate and leaves the table.)

Mercury. I come, sent by Jupiter, to seek the lost Proserpina.

Pluto. Mercury will take you away, Proserpina, if you wish to go.

Proserpina (hastening to Mercury). Oh, come! let us go now.

Mercury. Ceres has punished the land for the loss of her child. She blights the crops, and there are no harvests to gather. Man and beast starve, because Ceres withholds her kindly influence. To bring happiness to the earth, Jupiter bids Pluto restore bright Proserpina to the upper air.

Proserpina. Why do we delay? I am impatient.

Mercury. Jupiter named a condition. Proserpina may return if she has eaten nothing in Pluto's dominions. (Proserpina hangs her head and clasps her hands.) Speak, daughter of Ceres. Has food passed your lips since you entered the palace of King Pluto?

(*Proserpina* turns away her head. *Mercury* crosses to the table, looks at the pomegranate, and holds it up.)

Pluto (exultingly). She has tasted the pomegranate! She cannot return!

Proserpina (sobbing). I ate but six seeds.

Mercury. And for those six seeds you must spend six months of every year with Pluto. The other six months you may live in the upper world with Ceres. Come, Ceres awaits you.

(With smiling looks *Proserpina* dries her tears. *Pluto* looks sad as she bids him farewell.)

Proserpina. Adieu, Pluto, for a while. Six months will quickly pass, and I shall return, to wear the crown and be your queen again. Adieu! The springing grass and flowers are waiting for me! (Proserpina goes out with Mercury, turning to wave a last adieu to Pluto, who answers sadly.)



CEYX AND HALCYONE

CHARACTERS: Ceyx, Somnus, Morpheus; Halcyone, Juno, Iris, Nurse

SCENE I

(The palace of Ceyx, king of Thessaly. The king tells his wife, Halcyone, of his purpose to consult the oracle of Apollo.)

Haleyone. Ceyx, my husband, why does every day find you so sad? True, the loss of your brother was a sore affliction, but when our friends leave us, we must not grieve too much for them, lest we sadden their spirits in the underworld.

Ceyx. We cannot forget all at once. We must give Time his healing way, and until he cures our grief, we must perforce be sad.

Haleyone. Is there no other sorrow lurking in your mind? If you have any doubt or fear or haunting care, I, your true wife, would share it.

Ceyx. I think your affection would read whatever secret I tried to lock in my heart. Not all wives love as you do, Halcyone.

Halcyone. Because not all have so noble a husband as mine. But tell me your secret sorrow, since

you confess you have one. If I cannot counsel, I can comfort.

Ceyx. Whether or not you can aid me, I thank you for the ready sympathy that blesses my way. Know, then, that a lurking fear possesses me that I have offended the gods.

Halcyone. Ceyx! how can that be? You worship faithfully at the altars of all, neglecting none; I, who stand nearest to you, know how spotless your life is.

Ceyx. I know not why it is, but since the death of my brother, unfavorable omens have not been wanting. Gloomy visions haunt my sleep; a constant dread of evil doom disturbs me.

Halcyone. It is some illness that depresses you. The mind is servant, as well as master, of the body, and suffers with it.

Ceyx. No, Halcyone, my sickness is of the mind alone. I know but one way to cure it.

Halcyone. My heart forebodes evil! What would you do?

Ceyx. When men are in doubt what path to follow, they seek a guide. Apollo speaks through his oracle, instructing them what course to pursue. Therefore, Halcyone, I will go to Claros in Ionia, to inquire of the oracle concerning my fate.

Halcyone (shuddering). Would you leave me? What fault of mine has turned your affection from me? Can you be happy apart from me?

Ceyx. These are idle questions; nevertheless, for your peace I will answer them. I would leave you for a time that I may regain my happiness. My affection remains firm and unwavering as the polar star. Though I shall carry your image in my heart, I cannot be truly happy till I see your face again.

Halcyone. Beware of tempting the fury of the winds! They are mighty and pitiless. The daughter of Æolus, ruler of the winds, warns you of their rage. Often with difficulty can Æolus himself restrain them. They rush together with such frenzy that fire flashes from the conflict. Then Æolus sends them forth to toss the waves, till the billows rise to kiss the stars. What can a frail bark do against the might of Boreas?

Ceyx. Yet mariners make their way in safety. It is only the coward who refuses to try his fortune on the sea, when pleasure or duty calls.

Halcyone. If you are resolved to go, at least let me go with you, that I may not suffer cruelly with unavailing fears. You hesitate! Grant my prayer! Take me with you; then if shipwreck be your fate, at least we shall die together.

Ceyx. Should dangers arise, let me have the consolation of knowing that you do not share them.

Remain safe at home, to pray for my good fortune and to welcome me back. I promise by the rays of Hesperus, my father, that, if fate permits, I will return before the moon twice fills her circle. Farewell! The ship waits, and I must leave you. (They part, and *Halcyone* falls senseless.)

SCENE II

(Mount Olympus, the home of the gods. Juno summons Iris, bidding her seek the realm of sleep, and command that a vision be sent to Halcyone, to give tidings of the death of Ceyx. When the vessel had but half completed its course, a terrible storm was encountered. Ceyx suffered shipwreck and death, praying with his last breath that the waves might bear his body to Halcyone.)

Juno. Iris, goddess of the rainbow, my faithful messenger, come hither. I have an errand that requires speed.

Iris (appearing in her rainbowrobe). What is the pleasure of Juno, queen of heaven? My feet are impatient to serve her.

Juno. Listen, and you shall know the mission. Halcyone, wife of Ceyx, believing that he still lives, counts the days until his promised return. She prepares the garments which she hopes to wear in his sight, and makes all things ready for his coming.

Iris. Alas for Halcyone!

Juno. Hoping and fearing by turns, she wearies the gods with her pleading. To all she offers incense,

but most to me, praying that her husband may be safe, that in his absence he may love her faithfully, that he may be restored to her soon. I can no longer bear to receive prayers for one already dead, and to see, raised before my altars, hands that should be offering funeral rites.

Iris. It is a piteous tale.

Juno. I would have a dream sent to Halcyone, to tell her the fate of Ceyx. In a mountain cave near the Cimmerian country dwells Somnus, god of sleep. There Phœbus dares not enter, rising, or at midday, or setting. Clouds and shadows are about the place, and the light glimmers faintly. No wild beast, nor cattle, nor branch moved with the wind, nor sound of human conversation breaks the stillness. All is silence, save that the river Lethe flows by with a drowsy murmur. Do you know the place?

Iris. I know it well. Poppies grow before the cave, and from their juices Night collects her slumbers to scatter over the darkened earth.

Juno. Go to the dwelling of Somnus; bid him send a vision to Halcyone in the form of her husband, to make known the event.

Iris. Halcyone will grieve sorely.

Juno. Yet the sharpest grief is better than uneasy hope poisoned by fear.

Iris. I go to do your bidding.

SCENE III

(The cave of Somnus. In the deep twilight Somnus lies asleep on a couch of ebony adorned with black plumes and curtains. Around him lie innumerable dreams of different forms; some hover in the air. As Iris enters, her presence dispels the darkness, and a bright light shines through the cave. Somnus stirs, and gradually rouses himself. Scarcely opening his eyes, nodding drowsily, he raises himself on his arm and speaks.)

Somnus. Who breaks the stillness of my cave? Who pours unwelcome light through the darkness and disturbs my dreams? 'T is Iris. Speak your errand.

Iris. Somnus, gentlest of the gods, soother of careworn hearts, from bright Olympus I come, bringing commands from Juno. Halcyone waits in vain for the shipwrecked Ceyx, doubtful whether he is still in life or whether the waves have swept him to the underworld. Juno bids you dispatch a dream to Halcyone, showing her lost husband and the manner of his death. So shall vain hopes and prayers cease, and grief shall end in peace. (Iris goes out.)

Somnus (calling). Morpheus, my son, I have need of you. (Morpheus enters.)

Morpheus. What is your bidding?

Somnus. I choose you for this errand because you know well how to counterfeit the human form, even as it is seen in life. Take the form of Ceyx, who lately suffered shipwreck. Go to Halcyone, his wife, in a

dream; make known his dying and the manner of it. Assuming his form and his voice so perfectly that Halcyone will not doubt that he stands before her, tell the true story of his death. 'T is Juno's command.

Morpheus. I will wear his form so truly that Halcyone shall see only her lost one.

SCENE IV

(The seashore. *Halcyone*, warned by *Morpheus* of the death of her husband, wakes forlorn and goes down to the water.)

Nurse. Why do you come here, dear lady, in the early morning? The breeze blows cool. And why are you so sad?

Halcyone. Kind nurse, let me have my way. I am better here at the shore. Last night Ceyx appeared to me in a vision. Pale he was and weeping, and his look was that of one who has met death upon the deep. These were the words he spoke to me: "Do you recognize me, unhappy wife, or has death changed too much my visage? Your prayers, Halcyone, were unavailing. No more deceive yourself with vain hopes of my return. I met my death in shipwreck. The waves silenced my voice as I called your name. Arise! give me tears and lamentations. Let me not go down to Tartarus unwept."

I strove to embrace him, but grasped only the air, calling upon him vainly. My own voice wakened

me. When I found him not, I smote my breast and rent my garments.

Nurse. I mourn with you. You have lost a husband; Thessaly has lost a king.

Halcyone. My loss is far greater than the loss of Thessaly. This it was that I feared when I implored him not to leave me or trust himself to the waves. But I will not be separated from him. I will find a way to my husband. Look, nurse! Is not that his body, borne toward us by the waves?

Nurse. Nay, lady, I see nothing.

Halcyone (stretching out her arms). He comes! I will go to meet him. (She throws herself into the sea.)

Nurse. Halcyone has perished in the waves! But what do I see? She flies along the surface of the water, lamenting. And now another bird joins her. The pitying gods have changed them both into birds! Hark! I hear a voice. Surely it is a god who speaks.

Voice. So shall Halcyone and her love be united. As birds they shall mate, and have their home upon the ocean. For seven placid days in winter, Halcyone shall brood over her nest as it floats upon the sea. Then shall the way be safe to mariners, for Æolus, mindful of his daughter, shall guard the winds that they go not forth, and the waves shall be stilled.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CHARACTERS: Cupid, King; Venus, Psyche, Queen, Sisters, Ceres

SCENE I

(Mount Olympus. *Venus*, incensed at the praise given to *Psyche's* beauty, calls *Cupid* and commands him to punish *Psyche*.)

Cupid. Why does Venus call her son? And why those unhappy looks? Who has dared to offend you?

Venus. Great is the disgrace that has come upon me, Cupid. In vain have I been named queen of beauty and of love. In vain did Paris proclaim me more beautiful than Juno or Minerva. A mortal maiden seeks to eclipse me in my honors.

Cupid. Who can be so rash as to vie with Venus in beauty?

Venus. There is a virgin named Psyche, youngest of three sisters, and great is the praise of her charms. Strangers come from neighboring countries to look upon her, and all marvel at her beauty. So great is the admiration she excites, that my altars are deserted. The people sing her praises as she passes, and strew her way with flowers.

Cupid. Such vanity should be punished.

Venus. You say truly, and you shall give me my revenge. Infuse into the breast of the proud girl a passion for some unworthy being, that she may be degraded from her present triumph.

Cupid. Your command shall be obeyed.

SCENE II

(Mount Olympus. Cupid seeks his mother, to tell her the result of his mission to Psyche.)

Venus. At last you are returned; the time has been long. What success? Has the charm wrought its evil effect? Does Psyche love some mean, unworthy clown?

Cupid. Listen, mother, to my story. I hastened to the two fountains in the garden, from which flow the bitter and the sweet waters. I filled amber vases, one from each fountain, and took my way to the maiden, Psyche, whom I found asleep. Although the sight of her moved me to pity, I poured some bitter drops over her lips, and touched her side with the point of my arrow. At the touch she awoke and opened her eyes upon me. So startled was I, though invisible, that before I knew it I had wounded myself with my own arrow. I cared not for the wound. I wished only to repair the mischief I had done, and straightway poured the sweet water of joy over her silken hair.

Venus. Unlucky, perverse boy! how could you be so careless? See if a second time you cannot be more fortunate.

Cupid. Mother, I told you I wounded myself with my own arrow, and now I love the maiden Psyche, and wish only to do her good.

Venus. Begone from my sight, disobedient boy! Will you, my own son, join with all the world to disgrace me? Have a care how you attach yourself to the hated Psyche! Weak though I am, I shall find a way to thwart you.

SCENE III

(The home of *Psyche*. *Psyche*, frowned upon by *Venus*, loses favor and becomes lonely and unhappy. Her parents, the king and queen, mourn with her.)

Queen. I know not how it is that, though a few months ago you were so blessed by fortune, now you seem deserted.

King. All eyes still turn eagerly upon her, and all mouths speak her praises.

Queen. But no suitor comes to ask her in marriage. Her sisters, less beautiful than she, married royal princes, but she who was named with Venus is demanded in marriage by neither king nor prince nor plebeian.

Psyche. Peace, good mother. I think I am weary of my life, and your talk wearies me most of all.

King. Do not fret the child; it is not her fault. I grieve most for the oracle's words.

Psyche. What words?

King. I cannot keep them from you longer. Fearing that we had awakened the displeasure of the gods, I consulted the oracle of Apollo, and received this answer: "The virgin is destined for the bride of no mortal man. Her future husband awaits her on the top of the mountain. He is a monster whom neither gods nor men can resist."

(The queen breaks out into weeping.)

Psyche. Why, my dear parents, do you now lament? You should rather have grieved when the people showered upon me undeserved honors, and with one voice called me a Venus. I must believe that Venus is offended with me; I submit. Conduct me to the rock to which my unhappy fate calls me.

Queen. If you must go to the dreadful mountain, your family and friends will go with you in procession, as to a bridal. Yet my heart is heavy. Surely it will be more like a funeral than a bridal.

Psyche. Do not grieve, dear mother. The oracle has spoken; we have only to submit.

SCENE IV

(Psyche's new home in the valley. Psyche receives her sisters, and tells them what has befallen her.)

Psyche. Welcome, my sisters, to my home and all that it contains. I could no longer endure leaving you and our parents in ignorance of my lot. Did Zephyr bring you gently across the mountain to my valley?

First Sister. Yes, very gently. But tell us how it is that you are mistress not only of this palace but of the very winds of heaven.

Psyche. Know, dear sisters, that when our friends had departed and left me alone on the mountain top to which they brought me in sad bridal procession, Zephyr brought me to the valley. Here I found this palace, and was told that it was mine. From that day I have lived here in the greatest happiness.

Second Sister. Surely a wonderful ending to your adventure!

First Sister. Tell us of your husband. Is he truly the monster which the oracle foretold?

Psyche. Indeed he is not. He is a beautiful youth, and I love him dearly.

Second Sister. I suppose we shall see him soon.

Psyche. He would be glad to see you, but he hunts all day upon the mountains. I fear he will not return before night.

Second Sister. What manner of man is he? You say he is a beautiful youth.

Psyche. Very beautiful.

First Sister. Is he dark or fair?

Psyche. Sisters, you will think it strange, but to speak truth, I have never seen him. He does not wish me to look upon his face.

Second Sister. Who ever heard of such a strange proceeding!

First Sister. I felt sure there was some mystery behind all this magnificence. Psyche, I will tell you what you must do. You are in great peril. Your husband is a monster so fearful that he dares not show himself to you. Take my advice. Have a lamp ready, and some night when he is fast asleep, look at him, and see for yourself whether you should not strive to escape from a being so hideous, before he attempts to take your life. Farewell, Psyche! Follow my advice without delay.

Second Sister. Farewell, sister! Do not delay, or it will be too late.

SCENE V

(The temple of *Ceres. Psyche* follows the advice of her sisters, with unhappy results.)

Ceres. What are you doing here, Psyche?

Psyche. I am putting in order the sickles and rakes and different kinds of grain.

Ceres. That is a good act. How came you here? Psyche. I am very miserable; I followed bad advice, and my husband deserted me. When I told my sisters that I had never seen my husband because he left me before dawn, they told me to get a lamp and look at him while he slept. He must be a hideous monster, they said, who dared not let me see his face. I took the lamp and found no monster, but a most beauteous youth. Alas! a drop of burning oil fell on his shoulder. He spread his white wings—for he was a god—and flew out of the window. Seeking to follow him, I fell to the ground. What hurt me most of all was the thought that I had disobeyed him, for he had charged me never to attempt to see him. As I lay in the dust he said: "Go, Psyche, return to your sisters, since you value their advice more than mine. I inflict no other punishment on you than to leave you forever. Love cannot dwell with suspicion."

Ceres. I pity you, Psyche. Though I cannot shield you from the frowns of Venus, I can teach you how best to remove her anger. Go and submit yourself to her. Seek her forgiveness, and do her bidding patiently. Perhaps you may regain her favor and the husband you have lost.

SCENE VI

(The temple of *Venus*. *Cupid* finds *Psyche* in the storehouse of the temple, and aids her in a difficult task.)

Cupid. Why are you here, Psyche?

Psyche. O Cupid, I am trying to obey the commands of Venus, that I may obtain her forgiveness. But the task is too hard; I cannot perform it.

Cupid. What is the task?

Psyche. These were her words: "You are so ill-favored and disagreeable that the only way you can deserve your husband is by industry and diligence. I will make trial of your housewifery." Then she showed me this great quantity of wheat, barley, millet, vetches, beans, and lentils placed here for her doves, and said to me, "Take all these kinds of grain and seeds, and separate them, putting all of the same kind in a parcel by themselves. See that it is finished before evening." With these words she left me to my task, but I have not yet made a beginning. It would take a lifetime to sort this enormous heap into its different kinds.

Cupid. I will bring the ants to help you.

Psyche. Venus is determined to hate me, and gives me impossible things to do. But look! here comes the leader of the ant hill, with all his subjects. Busily they work, separating the pile, sorting each

kind to its parcel. I could never have done it in a thousand years, but they will have it done in an hour.

Cupid. Then you will be free, and Venus will pardon you.

Psyche. Not yet; a harder task remains. This second command she laid upon me: "Behold yonder grove which stretches along the margin of the water. There you will find sheep feeding without a shepherd, with golden fleece on their backs. Go, fetch me a sample of that precious wool gathered from every one of their fleeces." How can I hope to cross the stream, and unharmed deprive strange animals of their fleece?

Cupid. When you come to the stream, listen to the voice of the river god. He will direct you. Be brave, and obey his bidding. Farewell!

SCENE VII

(The temple of *Venus*. *Psyche* humbly comes to *Venus*, to know her further pleasure.)

Venus. How now, idle maid! Have you abandoned your task? You surely have not finished sorting the grains.

Psyche. If Venus will but look in the storehouse, she will see that the work is done.

Venus. I know very well that your hands did not do it all. If it is done, some one has helped you. Do

you dare to say you have performed the second task also? Have you brought me the golden wool?

Psyche. It is here.

Venus. Tell me, obstinate girl, how you obtained it. Psyche. As I stood by the stream, the voice of the river god spoke through the reeds in harmonious murmurs, and bade me wait till noon, when the flock would be resting in the shade. Thus I crossed in safety, and found the woolly gold clinging to the bushes and the trunks of the trees.

Venus. Always helped by others! Never depending upon yourself! But I have another task for you. Go to the infernal shades and give this box to Proserpina. Say to her, "My mistress Venus desires you to send her a little of your beauty, for in tending her sick son she has lost some of her own." Be not too long on your errand, for I must paint myself with what you bring me, to appear at the banquet of the gods this evening.

SCENE VIII

(The roadside. *Cupid* finds *Psyche* lying on the ground, without sense or motion.)

Cupid. What is this? The open box, and Psyche in a deep sleep! First I will gather up the sleep and put it in the box again; then I will wake Psyche. The heavy sleep is shut in the box once more. Now

to touch Psyche with my arrow, that she may open her eyes. (Cupid touches Psyche. She opens her eyes.) What is this, Psyche? Who has harmed you?

Psyche. Where am I? Oh! I remember. I fear I have done wrong again.

Cupid. What has happened?

Psyche (rubbing her eyes). I am hardly yet awake. Now I remember. I will tell you everything. Venus gave me this box and sent me to the underworld to ask Proserpina for some of her beauty. I would have thrown myself from a high tower, thinking that Venus meant my destruction, but a voice forbade, and told me of a cave through which I might reach the realms of Pluto. The voice instructed me how to pass by Cerberus, the three-headed dog, and how to prevail with Charon, the ferryman, to take me across the black river and bring me back. Then the voice said, "When Proserpina has given you the box, filled with her beauty, take heed above all things that you never once open it nor allow your curiosity to pry into the treasure of the beauty of the goddesses."

Cupid. Yet this same curiosity led you to disobey, and but for me you would have perished.

Psyche. Listen! I found Pluto's palace and gave the message from Venus. I refused to taste the rich banquet Proserpina offered me and, content with coarse bread, hastened to the upper world with the box of Venus. But when I had reached the air again, a longing seized me to look within the box. It was hard that I could not take a bit of the divine beauty, to make myself lovelier in the eyes of my husband. So I carefully opened the box, but found no beauty within, — nothing save this heavy sleep, which overcame me like death.

Cupid. But I have good news, Psyche. I have told Jupiter of our misfortunes, and he has lent a favoring ear to my complaint.

Psyche. Will he remove the enmity of Venus?

Cupid. He will do that and better things yet. I could not bear that my love should be a mortal maiden, who must die and leave me. I prayed Jupiter to make you immortal. He consents.

Psyche. Can this be true?

Cupid. Go now to Venus, my mother. When you have restored the box she gave you, Mercury will come to bring you to Olympus, where the gods even now assemble. There Jupiter will give you a cup of ambrosia, the draft which will make you immortal. So shall our trials have an end, and we shall enjoy the happiness of eternity!



CADMUS

CHARACTERS: Cadmus, Phænicians; Europa, Maidens

SCENE I

(A meadow in Phœnicia by the seashore. *Europa*, daughter of *Agenor*, King of Phœnicia, is gathering flowers with other maidens.)

Europa. I think the world has nothing else so beautiful as these meadows rich with spring. Let us spend the long bright day here gathering flowers.

First Maiden. Do you remember? A year ago we came here to gather fragrant lilies.

Second Maiden. And next year we will come again to gather them.

Europa. Who knows where we shall be next year? Who cares to know? The present moment is sweet, and that is enough.

Third Maiden. I will gather violets all day long. Fourth Maiden. The yellow crocus for me.

Second Maiden. I love the sweet-breathed narcissus.

First Maiden. I gather the creeping thyme for its fragrance.

Fourth Maiden. Yet Europa's flower is the most beautiful.

Europa (holding a crimson rose to her face to inhale its sweetness). One rose is better than millions of violets.

Third Maiden. And Europa herself is sweeter than any rose that blooms.

(A white bull approaches.)

Europa. Look! there is a snow-white bull. Where can he have come from? I never saw him before.

Second Maiden. It were best not to venture too near him.

Europa. See his small, transparent horns! First Maiden. How gentle he is!

Fourth Maiden. I am not afraid of him. Let us go nearer.

Third Maiden. His breath is sweeter than the fragrance of the meadows.

Second Maiden. See! I touched him, and he did not harm me.

Europa. At first I was afraid of him, but I have lost my fear. Look! he eats flowers from my hand. I will gather more for him. How beautiful he is!

First Maiden. Europa pats him and wreathes his horns with garlands.

Europa. He is a gentle playfellow. See how he kneels, as if inviting us to mount upon his back. Come, playmates, his back is broad enough to carry us all. How mild he is! He lacks nothing but speech.

Fourth Maiden. If you dare to mount him, I will follow you.

Third Maiden. We will all come if you will make room for us. But look! what is the meaning of this? As soon as Europa is on his back, the bull leaps into the air, and now he runs swiftly to the sea.

Fourth Maiden. Europa calls, but we cannot hear. First Maiden. She stretches her hands to us in vain.

Third Maiden. Now they have reached the sea. The bull plunges in with Europa upon his back!

Second Maiden. We shall never see Europa more!

SCENE II

(Mount Parnassus, before the Castalian cave. *Cadmus*, having wandered over the whole world vainly in search of *Europa*, consults the oracle of Phœbus.)

Cadmus. Weary with wandering, I come to ask the sacred oracle where I may find a home. Here is the Castalian cave, and I must wait to hear the awful voice issue forth. I pray Heaven it may guide me aright.

Oracle (invisible). Who comes near my cave?

Cadmus. Cadmus, son of Agenor, seeks thy aid. When Europa was stolen from us by the snow-white bull, Agenor, grieving for his lost child, sent me forth to find her, and forbade me to return without



EUROPA

her. I have sought my sister long and faithfully, but always in vain. I dare not return to Agenor without the maiden. An exiled wanderer, I come to thee to ask where I may make my home.

Oracle. A heifer will meet thee in the lonely fields, one that has never borne the yoke or dragged the crooked plow. Follow her, and where she shall lie down on the grass, there build a city.

Cadmus. If she lead me safely, I will render due thanks to Phœbus, and bless the hour that brought me to this cave. (Turning from the cave) And there on the hillside I see a heifer. I trust the oracle and follow wherever the guide may lead, hoping she may bring my wanderings to an end.

SCENE III

(Cadmus and his Phœnician companions, having followed the heifer as the oracle commanded, see her lie down, and take her resting place for their home.)

Cadmus. So the words of the oracle are fulfilled! Happy the man who hears and obeys! Weary with my wanderings in many lands where I vainly sought the lost Europa, and fearing to return without her, I prayed Apollo to tell me where I should find a home. Hardly had I left the Castalian cave, when the promised guide, the heifer, appeared, walking slowly before me. Closely I followed her, leaving

you, my companions, behind, and, as I went, offering my prayers to Phœbus.

First Phanician. We cannot doubt that she was sent by Apollo to guide your wanderings to a happy end.

Second Phænician. See! she has crossed the stream. Third Phænician. The channel was shallow. We must follow her.

Cadmus. Shallow or deep, I cross the stream that she crosses.

Second Phænician. She has come out into the plain.

First Phanician. She stands still!

Third Phanician. Mark how she lifts her broad forehead to the sky.

Cadmus. The air is filled with her lowings.

First Phænician. She looks back at us.

Second Phænician. She lies down!

Cadmus. At last! I bless you, Heavenly Powers, for the aid vouchsafed me! I kiss the stranger land which is to be my home. Ye unknown mountains and fields, I salute you. I must sacrifice to Jupiter. Go, trusted Phœnicians, companions of my way, and bring water from the running springs. Look in the ancient grove; examine its caverns for springs, and bring clear water for the libation. I will wait here.

SCENE IV

(Cadmus, wondering that his companions do not return, goes to look for them.)

Cadmus. Alas for my brave companions, killed by the dragon that dwelt in this cave! He would not suffer them to fill the urns, but seized them mercilessly. Yet is their death avenged; the monster lies dead at my feet, slain by my javelin. Hideous he is in death as in life.

Voice. Look no longer upon the work of thy hands, Cadmus. Thy city is yet to be built, and it must be peopled. Sow the dragon's teeth as the seeds of a future people. They shall bear a crop of men.

Cadmus. I know not whence the voice comes, whether from above or from below, but surely it is Minerva's, and I must obey. Great is the labor to draw these firmly rooted teeth from the monstrous jaws, yet he who killed the dragon may hope to do this also. Would that I had gone with my companions to look in the cave for water! So might their lives have been saved. (Cadmus pulls the dragon's teeth, turns up the earth, and sows the teeth.) The voice bade me sow the seeds of a new people. Methinks dragon's teeth should bring forth dragons, not men. I hope the crop will prove a speedy one, that I may not have long to wait. (He looks at the ground in astonishment.)

The ground glistens as if with steel. Spear points are thrust upward from the earth! Sword blades and helmets follow! Under each helmet is an angry face. Strong arms wield spear and sword. The dragon's teeth have grown into armed men, and I too must take arms against this new enemy.

Voice. Do not take arms. Meddle not with our civil war.

Cadmus. The steel-clad warriors turn not against me, but against one another. Fiercely they fight; quickly they fall. Soon all will be killed, and I shall have none left to help me build my city. (He watches the conflict closely.) Now there are only five remaining to build my city for me. So soon has blind rage destroyed them.

Voice. Cadmus, bid those five warriors sheathe their swords.

Cadmus. Will they obey me?

Voice. Question not. Bid them sheathe their swords. They will help you to build the city.

Cadmus (to the warriors). Sheathe your swords instantly, before you are all killed. You know not why you are fighting. The instant you saw the light, you drew your swords and killed your brothers for no cause. Now you shall help me build my city, and I will show you how much better is peace than war.

NARCISSUS

CHARACTERS: Tiresias, Narcissus; Liriope, Juno, Echo, Maiden, Nymphs

SCENE I

(Liriope seeks Tiresias the soothsayer, to ask him concerning her son's destiny.)

Tiresias. Since cruel Juno has taken away my sight, day and night are alike to me. No more do the resplendent skies or the fertile vales delight me. Perpetual darkness is upon me, nor can any friendly face cheer my lonely hours. Yet my eyes, blind to the present, can read the future, and many timid or curious ones come to learn their destiny. Even now I hear the steps of one who seeks to know what perhaps were better concealed.

Liriope. O Tiresias, you can prophesy truly, and to you I bring my request. I pray you, grant what I ask.

Tiresias. It is Liriope who speaks, and she asks concerning the fate of her son Narcissus.

Liriope. He who can read the future can also read the present aright. You have said truly. Tell me if the beauteous Narcissus, my son, will gather

a ripe harvest of years or be sent to an untimely grave, leaving me sorrowing.

Tiresias. Why seek to pluck the veil aside? Heaven mercifully hides the future, to save us from fruitless weeping. Surely happy ignorance is better than painful knowledge.

Liriope. I ask for a happy certainty that Narcissus will not come to an untimely end but will be crowned with many years.

Tiresias. Narcissus will live long and happily upon the earth, if he never knows himself.

Liriope. I understand not the condition. May further knowledge be given?

Tiresias. I can speak the word, but I may not interpret it. This is all that can be vouchsafed concerning the fate of Narcissus.

SCENE II

(*Echo* has offended *Juno* by her chatter, and is punished for her fault.)

Juno. You are a vain and forward nymph, fond of the sound of your own voice and ever telling long stories when you should be silent. I am tired of your prattle, and to-day you shall feel the weight of my displeasure.

Echo. Of course, whatever Juno, queen of heaven, does is well done, yet it is hard to see how I can

have been at fault. I tell only the truth, and surely it is no crime to speak. We were given tongues that we might use them.

Juno. There it is, ever answering and arguing instead of submitting in meek silence!

Echo. Is it wrong to ask my fault if I do not understand why I am blamed?

Juno. Will the tiresome creature drive me to frenzy? Your punishment shall be swift. Since you are so fond of the last word, you may have it forever, but forever lose the power of saying the first word. From this time forth you can only mock and babble.

Echo. Babble.

Juno. This shall be your perpetual punishment, and whenever you are tired of repeating the last word, remember, for your satisfaction, that this disgrace has come upon you for offending Juno with your senseless clatter.

Echo. Clatter.

SCENE III

(*Echo* has seen the beautiful youth, *Narcissus*, following the chase upon the mountains, and loves him. She follows him and would gladly speak, if it were in her power.)

Narcissus. Where are my companions? I outstripped them in the chase, and they are far behind. Hark! I hear steps. Who's here?

Echo (outside). Here.

Narcissus. Come!

Echo (outside). Come!

Narcissus (looking in all directions). I do not see you.

Echo (outside). See you.

Narcissus. Why do you shun me?

Echo (outside). Shun me?

Narcissus. Come and meet me.

Echo (entering quickly, and trying to take the hand of Nar-aissus). Meet me.

Narcissus (starting back). Hands off! I would not have you love me.

Echo: Love me.

Narcissus. I do not love you; I hate you. (He runs out.) Echo. Hate you. (She runs after Narcissus.)

SCENE IV

(A maiden who has been slighted by *Narcissus* offers a prayer to *Nemesis*, goddess of retribution, that sometime *Narcissus* may love without return.)

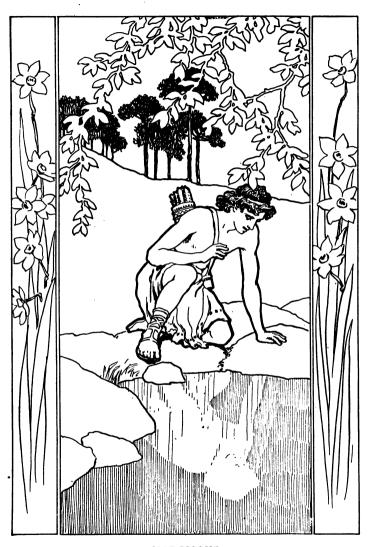
Maiden. O Nemesis, goddess of vengeance, to thee I pray for vengeance on Narcissus. Many a nymph and many a maiden has loved him. He scorns all and loves none. Me has he slighted and scorned, and my heart droops beneath his unkindness. Hear my prayer, O Nemesis, for the gods love not the proud man. Let the day come when Narcissus shall love in vain. Let him pour out the

worship of his heart, and meet no return. Let him complain and mourn in vain. Let him, the scorner, be scorned. Hear my prayer, O goddess, for it is just!

SCENE V

(Naraissus, fatigued and thirsty from the toils of the chase, comes to a clear spring to drink, and sees his own image in the water.)

Narcissus. Ah, good it is, when heated with running, to find a clear spring. This water is like silver, untouched by shepherds, or goats from the mountain, or cattle of any kind. No fallen leaves or branches deface it; the grass is fresh on the banks, and rocks shelter it from the sun. Here I will rest and drink. (As he drinks, he sees his reflection in the water, and starts back in amazement. Pleased, he soon endeavors to kiss the image, to embrace it.) Who is that? I see a beauteous form within the water. The face is gentle, with smiling lips. I love it as I look upon it. As often as I bring my lips to the stream, so often does he come toward me with his face held up. When I extend my arms to him, he reaches to me. As I smile, he answers. If I nod, he nods in return. (Narcissus acts all this as he speaks.) Yet if I try to touch him, I grasp but water, and no living, loving person. I weep, and he weeps, too. When I speak, his lips move to reply, to mourn our hard fate. Miserable me! I love what can never



NARCISSUS

love in return. (He weeps.) Now my tears fall into the stream. Alas! the beauteous form grows dim and disturbed. It disappears. Whither would you fly? Stay, I beseech! Do not abandon me. Let me at least behold you, though I may never touch you. Behold me, a miserable sufferer!

Echo (invisible throughout the scene). Sufferer! Narcissus. Let me die! Echo. Let me die! Narcissus. O hard fate! Echo. Hard fate! Narcissus. Alas, alas! Echo. Alas!

(Narcissus beats his breast. The same sound is repeated by Echo.)

Narcissus. Ah, youth, beloved in vain!

Echo. Beloved in vain!

Narcissus. Farewell!

Echo. Farewell!

SCENE VI

(The river bank. The nymphs mourn the fate of Narcissus.)

First Nymph. Mourn for Narcissus!

Second Nymph. The beauteous youth is no more!

Third Nymph. Who so fair as Narcissus?

Fourth Nymph. No more shall we see him roaming on the mountain.

First Nymph. He has vanished from the leafy hillside and the stream.

Fourth Nymph. He is cut off in his early beauty. Third Nymph. He has perished like a tender flower.

Second Nymph. But where is Narcissus? I cannot find him.

First Nymph. I too have looked in vain for the body of Narcissus, by the stream, in the wood, on the hillside.

Fourth Nymph. Some god must have taken him away.

Third Nymph. Look here, my sisters, see this yellow flower springing from the ground, with white leaves about it.

Second Nymph. It was never seen before.

First Nymph. Never!

Third Nymph (solemnly). This is Narcissus.

Fourth Nymph. Yes, Narcissus is turned into a flower, and we will always call it by his name. Farewell to Narcissus!

First Nymph. Farewell, Narcissus!

All. Farewell!



ARACHNE

CHARACTERS: Arachne, Minerva, Grecian Maidens

SCENE I

(The wayside, near the home of *Arachne*. People come and go. Two maidens stand together talking; one of them wears a mantle; the other carries a pitcher. A third maiden joins them.)

First Maiden. Come with me to the fountain. The way is long if one goes alone, and I have many things to tell you.

Second Maiden. Then tell them here, for I must return to my spinning.

First Maiden. Always spinning! One would think you were Arachne.

Third Maiden. See the beautiful new mantle! (She examines the mantle of the second maiden.) How fine and even the web, and what a rich color! You must be learning of Arachne.

Second Maiden. I am tired of the name of Arachne. Other Grecian maidens can spin; besides, she is so vain of her work that one is loath to praise it. Her head is turned with silly conceit already.

Third Maiden. Be that as it may, I never saw such weaving by another. (Second maiden tosses her head.)

Be not offended. Did I not praise the mantle? Surely Minerva has taught Arachne, and when I say Arachne's work is marvelous, I praise the goddess, not Arachne.

First Maiden. That is true. Arachne is wrong to say she did not learn from Minerva. Who is Arachne, that she of herself should have such wonderful skill? She is of humble family. Her father, Idmon of Colophon, used to dye the soaking wool with purple. Her mother was of no higher rank. Yet this village maiden is famed throughout all Lydia for her skill.

Third Maiden. I say her weaving is wonderful. The nymphs desert the vineyards and the streams, to watch her at her work. Whether she is rolling the rough wool into balls, or drawing out the fleeces into threads fine as mist, or moving the spindle with her nimble thumb, or embroidering with the needle, all is wonderful.

Second Maiden. Still harping on the old theme! I will go where the sound of Arachne's name will not reach me. (She goes out, putting her hands to her ears.)

Third Maiden. Truly she must go far to escape the sound of Arachne's name.

First Maiden. And yet Arachne denies that she is Minerva's pupil, and dares to think of competing

with the goddess. Not easily will Minerva forgive a mortal who defies her. I fear for Arachne, unless she learns humility.

(They go out.)

SCENE II

(The home of *Arachne*. Looms and a spinning wheel are in the room. *Arachne* sits spinning.)

Arachne. I am never so happy as when spinning and weaving. The sharp shuttle flies in and out, the bright colors appear, and the beauty of heaven and earth is reflected in my web.

(A knock is heard. *Minerva* enters, disguised as an old woman. She has gray hair and carries a staff.)

Minerva. May an old woman rest a few moments in your cottage?

Arachne. Yes, mother, and you may watch me as I work. See the beautiful thread I am spinning.

Minerva. That is well done. You are a credit to your teacher, Minerva.

Arachne (irritably). No goddess taught me. I spin and weave of my own skill and knowledge. Neither mortal nor goddess can compare with me. Let Minerva try her weaving with mine; if beaten, I will pay the penalty.

Minerva. Experience comes from lengthened years, and so I offer you sage advice. Do not despise it.

Be content with the greatest fame among mortals, but yield to the goddess. Ask pardon humbly for your presumption, and Minerva will forgive.

Arachne (angrily, stopping her spinning). Doting old crone, keep your advice for those who may need it. I am not your daughter or your daughter-in-law, that you should dare to counsel me. I have wisdom sufficient for my needs, and your words are unavailing. I know what I say, and I stand to it. I am not afraid of Minerva; let her try her skill, if she dare venture. Why does she not come herself? Why does she decline the contest?

Minerva. She is here! (Minerva throws off her disguise.)
Arachne (clasping her hands on her breast in alarm, then recovering herself and pointing to the loom). There is the web. I gladly enter the contest.

(Minerva sits at one web, and Arachne at another. Maidens come in and watch the weaving.)

First Maiden (looking at Minerva's web). See the twelve gods sitting in state, with Jupiter in the midst! See Neptune with his trident, and Minerva with her helmet and shield! Now the goddess shows the earth, struck by Minerva's spear, bringing forth the olive. She shows herself victorious, and the gods admiring her work. Look! in the corners she shows how the gods have punished presumptuous mortals.

Second Maiden. Arachne, foolish one, take warning while there is yet time! Even now, perchance, the goddess would pardon.

Third Maiden. Repent, Arachne, before it is too late, — before the swift anger of Pallas strikes.

Arachne. I am not afraid to challenge Minerva. Fourth Maiden (watching Arachne). Beautiful are the colors of Arachne's web. Bright shines the Tyrian purple, and one hue blends with another as in the rainbow of heaven. Behold pictures of the gods, of animals, of flowers. The butterfly seems to hover above the rose. How perfect every part! The velvet nap on the wings, the outstretched horns, the glittering eyes! Does he not seem to live and move? Wonderful is Arachne's work!

First Maiden. See the fine border Arachne has made! How the flowers creep along the ivy! Surely art can do no more. Yet should the maiden fear Pallas. I know not what fearful punishment the rash one will receive, for in her design she mocks the gods, showing them unworthy.

Arachne (rising). I fear not to show my web to the stern goddess. Let her find a fault if she can. Let the whole world judge between us.

Minerva. (She stands a moment, looking at the web, then tears it across angrily. She strikes Arachne on the forehead with her shuttle. Arachne kneels imploringly.) So, proud mortal,

would you be equal with the gods? Would you mock us? Know the punishment that awaits you for your wicked pride. You shall live, but you shall never forget to be humble. I will sprinkle you with aconite, and straightway you shall grow small and shrunken. (Minerva pours a liquid from a small vial.) You shall run upon the floor under the feet of men; you shall hang in the air. Yet shall you ever spin the finest of threads, for you shall be transformed into a spider. (Minerva waves her hand, and Arachne drops to the floor, a spider.)



NIOBE

CHARACTERS: Apollo; Niobe, Latona, Diana, Theban Women

SCENE I

(A street in Thebes. *Niobe*, queen of Thebes, appears among the people, and reproves them for worshiping *Latona* and her children, *Apollo* and *Diana*.)

First Woman. Go you to the temple to-day?

Second Woman. Surely I do not stay away from the yearly celebration in honor of Latona and her children. I would not offend Latona or Apollo or yet Diana.

Third Woman. See the long procession of Theban women, wreathed with laurel, and bearing frankincense!

Fourth Woman. I do not see Queen Niobe.

First Woman. 'T is said that Niobe knew Arachne in her girlhood, yet she seems to take no warning from Arachne's fate.

Third Woman. Few women have such reason for pride as Niobe. She is beautiful; she boasts descent from the gods; her husband rules over a powerful kingdom; yet she is prouder of her seven sons and seven daughters than of anything else.

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First Woman. Hush! Niobe comes this way, but she wears no laurel, and her hands are empty of frankincense. See the gold on her garments, and the gems!

Niobe. What madness is this, to honor beings you have only heard of, rather than those whose power you can see with your own eyes! Why is Latona worshiped at the altars, while I am unregarded? Tantalus, companion of the gods, was my father. My grandsire was the mighty Atlas, who bears the ethereal skies upon his neck. Jupiter is my other grandsire. My husband, Amphion, is king of Thebes; he built its walls to the sound of the lyre. I have wealth and beauty. More than all this, I have seven sons and seven daughters. Have I not reason for pride? You worship Latona, the Titan's daughter, with her two children. I have seven times as many. I am fortunate, and who shall deny it? Who can doubt that I shall remain fortunate? I am too great for Fortune to hurt. Even if she should take much away, much would still remain. Suppose it were possible for me to lose some of my children, I should still be richer than Latona, who has only two. Leave these solemnities! Hasten away from the sacrifice, and take the laurel from your hair!

(The women obey, and abandon the altars.)

SCENE II

(Mount Cynthus, the home of *Latona*. *Apollo* and *Diana*, children of *Latona*, hear the words of *Niobe*, and go to avenge the insult to their mother.)

Latona. Am I indeed a goddess? Niobe forbids the Theban women to worship me. She boasts herself superior to me, because, forsooth, she has seven sons and seven daughters, while I have only you, Apollo and Diana. I, who yield to no goddess save Juno, am discredited and driven from my altars forever, unless you give me aid!

Apollo. Niobe dared Fortune to harm her. She bade the women take the laurel from their hair.

Diana. She boasts her high descent, and makes herself like one of the gods.

Latona. Such pride was never before seen in a human being. Will you, my children, suffer it to go unpunished? Can you not rain swift arrows of retribution for her impiety?

Apollo. Mother, cease your complaints. So punishment shall come the more swiftly.

Diana. Niobe shall learn the difference between mortals and gods. Veil yourself in clouds, and come to the citadel. We shall have need of arrows.

NIOBE 115

SCENE III

(A street in Thebes. The Theban women tell the story of Latona's revenge.)

First Woman. Swift was Latona's answer to Niobe's boasting.

Second Woman. Pray Heaven her wrath fall not on all of us who forsook her altar at the bidding of Niobe.

Third Woman. You speak in riddles. I understand nothing of all this.

Fourth Woman. Have you not heard of Niobe's punishment?

Third Woman. I have this moment come forth, and one does not gather news by the hearthstone.

First Woman. I saw the first arrow fall in the wide plain where the charioteers drive and the youths exercise in the games. From the road I marked the seven sons of Amphion and Niobe, riding their spirited steeds and driving their chariots. As I looked, Ismenus, the first-born, was struck by an arrow from above. He fell lifeless. Another, hearing the sound of the bow, gave the rein to his frightened horses, thinking to escape. The arrow overtook him. Two others stood wrestling, when one arrow pierced them both. Then two other arrows did their deadly work, and there remained only one

of Niobe's seven sons, — the youngest. Lifting his arms, he prayed to be spared, but another arrow was on its way, and cut short his life.

Third Woman. Was Niobe humbled by her cruel punishment?

Fourth Woman. I saw her when men told her of the death of her sons. Amphion, the father, unable to bear the weight of so much sorrow, thrust his sword through his breast. In Niobe, rage against the all-powerful gods contended with grief. She embraced the bodies of her sons, kissing them, then raised her arms toward heaven, defying the gods. "Cruel Latona," she said, "smile at my grief, if you will. Yet where is thy triumph? Bereaved as I am, I am still richer than thou."

Third Woman. Could any mortal utter such words to the gods?

Fourth Woman. While she was speaking, the bow sounded, striking terror to all hearts save Niobe's alone. Excess of grief had taken away her fear. The sisters were standing in mourning array by the biers of their brothers, when the arrows struck them. All fell save one. Niobe, embracing her, cried, "Spare me one, the youngest! Oh, spare me one from so many!" While she spoke, the maiden fell.

Third Woman. Who would not pity Niobe!

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Fourth Woman. Desolate she sat, surrounded by her dead, and seemed frozen with grief. The breeze moved not her hair; her cheek had no color; her eyes were fixed; her arms made no gesture and her foot no step; her tongue refused to speak; the blood no longer flowed in her veins, for she was no longer a living mortal; she was changed to stone.



PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

CHARACTERS: Polydectes, Perseus, Mercury, Courtiers, Attendants; Minerva

SCENE I

(The palace of King Polydectes. The king is seated upon his throne. Courtiers stand near.)

Polydectes. Where is the idle youth, Perseus? Day and night he hangs about the palace, always waiting, never brave and valiant in deeds. I wish the waves had swallowed him up before he landed in my kingdom. With Danaë, his mother, he came from Argos, floating in a chest. Dictys, the foolish fisherman, found the chest, and brought them to land.

First Courtier. Is there no dangerous quest on which the youth may be sent, to learn wisdom?

Polydectes. Quests enough there are, if he prove not too cowardly to attempt them. Call Perseus hither. (An attendant goes out.) I will send the idler on a journey from which he will not soon return.

Second Courtier. Your Majesty will do well.

(Perseus enters.)

Polydectes. Perseus, for years you have dwelt in my kingdom. What benefits you have received at

my hand, you know; it is not for me to number them over. Doubtless now that you have grown to manhood you would willingly repay some of them.

Perseus. Most willingly; I would risk my life to do so.

Polydectes. I will show you a way. Bring me the head of the Gorgon, Medusa.

Courtiers. The head of Medusa!

Perseus. I go to-morrow. I will bring you the Gorgon's head, or die in the attempt. (He hastens out.)

Second Courtier. A fine quest, truly, and one from which Perseus will not soon return!

Polydectes (laughing). How eagerly the stripling fell into the trap! The best sword is powerless against Medusa. He will never return.

Courtiers. He will never return! (The courtiers follow Polydectes out, laughing and repeating, "He will never return.")

SCENE II

(Perseus has started on his journey, and is sitting by the roadside, his head in his hands. Mercury appears, wearing his winged cap and sandals, and carrying a staff.)

Mercury. Why so sad, Perseus?

Perseus. I have undertaken a difficult adventure.

Mercury. Perhaps I can aid you. I have helped many people through difficulties.

Perseus. Polydectes has commanded me to bring the head of Medusa, and I do not know the way to her cave.

Mercury. I will help you, and my sister Minerva will gladly give her aid. She has no love for Medusa, the Gorgon. Once Medusa was a beautiful maiden. Her chief glory was her hair, which hung over her shoulders in long golden ringlets. Blinded by vanity, she dared to set herself above Minerva. The punishment was swift. Pallas changed Medusa to a hideous monster, and the beautiful ringlets were turned to hissing snakes. So frightful is she that no living thing can behold her without being turned to stone.

Perseus. How can I reach the far cavern in which Medusa dwells? How find the path?

Mercury. Take my winged sandals. They will show the way.

(Mercury gives his sandals to Perseus. Minerva appears.)

Minerva. I will walk by your side. When you hear the rustle of my garments, you will know I am near, ready to help. On a rocky shore, three days' journey from here, is a black precipice. At the foot of the frowning cliff is a beach of snowy sand. There, in a gloomy cavern, sleeps the Gorgon, lulled by the tumult of the waves.

Perseus. Teach me how I may attack Medusa without being turned to stone when I look upon her.

Minerva. Great is the danger, indeed. All about the cave are the stony figures of men and beasts, unhappy victims of her power. Take warning by their fate, and let not your eyes rest upon her face.

Perseus. Shall I strike out blindly, smiting the empty air?

Minerva (giving Perseus her shield). I will lend you my shield. On its surface you can see the Gorgon reflected as by a mirror, and strike without looking at her face.

Perseus. Though my weak arm can avail little against a monster so fearful, I will seek the cavern. Though Danaë should never again behold her son, I will perish bravely rather than live a coward.

Mercury (giving his sword to Perseus). Take my sword, and use it before Medusa wakes. Turn not your eyes from the shield, lest the sight of the face turn you to stone ere you have time to strike.

Minerva. Be not dismayed by the serpents, however they writhe and hiss and lift their threatening heads. Look always in the shield, and the Gorgon cannot harm you.

Perseus. The sandals shall guide me to Medusa's cave, where the shield shall protect me from the deadly face. The sword shall smite swiftly. The sound of rustling garments beside me shall speak of succor near. I go, and yours shall be the victory, ministering Powers. (He goes off triumphantly, waving his sword.)

SCENE III

(The palace of *Polydectes*. The king is seated on his throne, surrounded by courtiers.)

Polydectes. It is four days since Perseus went forth on his errand.

First Courtier. Long before this time Medusa has turned him to stone.

Second Courtier. Or else he lost his way and never reached her cave.

Third Courtier. He had a faint heart, for all he pretended to go so willingly.

Fourth Courtier. Your Majesty did well to send him forth. We shall never see him more.

Polydectes. No, we shall never be troubled again with his hateful presence. If he reached Medusa's cave, he shared the fate of all who have seen her. If he abandoned the quest, he will be ashamed to set foot in my kingdom again.

Attendant (entering in haste). Know, O King, that . Perseus waits to learn your pleasure.

(There is a general movement of consternation. All fall back from the entrance, and gather around the throne. The king's scepter falls from his hand; he recovers his composure by an effort.)

Polydectes. Bid Perseus come hither.

(Perseus enters, equipped with sandals, sword, and shield, and carrying Medusa's head in his pouch. He kneels before Polydectes.)

Perseus. King Polydectes, I have done your bidding.

Polydectes. Have a care how you boast without cause. Those who enter Medusa's cave do not return.

Perseus. I have the Gorgon's head, O King.

Polydectes. Words are easy. Show us the head, and we shall believe you.

(*Perseus* hesitates. The courtiers whisper together. Those nearest the throne speak in an undertone to *Polydectes*, casting angry and suspicious glances upon *Perseus*.)

First Courtier. If Perseus speaks truth, it is an easy task to prove his words.

All. Show us the head! Show us the head! Show us the head of Medusa with the snaky locks!

Perseus (still hesitating). King Polydectes, I am loath to show the Gorgon's head.

Second Courtier. There spoke the coward and the cheat.

Fourth Courtier. He mocks us. He has no Gorgon's head.

Third Courtier. Show us the head, or we will take your own head for a football!

Second Courtier. See how he mocks the royal command! We call him coward and traitor, and he dares not refuse the names.

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Polydectes (sternly). Obey on your peril, rebellious youth! Show me the Gorgon's head, or you shall lose your own! (Perseus sighs, still hesitating.) This instant, or you die!

Perseus (sadly). Behold it, then!

(As *Perseus* speaks, he draws the head from his pouch, and holds it up. All turn toward it eagerly, then stand motionless, turned to stone.)



PERSEUS AND ATLAS

CHARACTERS: Atlas, Perseus

SCENE I

(Perseus, fresh from his victory over the Gorgon, still wearing the winged shoes, and bringing in his pouch the head of Medusa, comes to the kingdom of Atlas.)

Atlas. Who are you, stranger, and why uninvited do you seek my kingdom?

Perseus. My friend, if the glory of a noble race moves you, Jupiter is my father. To you, Atlas, hugest among men, I come, to rest until day begins.

Atlas. I like not men that journey by night.

Perseus. Men cannot always choose their times and their seasons. If you did but know my reasons for traveling by night, they are excellent ones.

Atlas. A bad purpose can be defended as easily as a good one.

Perseus. Many times have I heard of Atlas, son of Iapetus, — of the vastness of his body and the excellence of his thousand flocks and herds. I have heard, too, of his golden trees, with leaves of shining gold, branches of gold, and apples of gold.

Atlas. All the world knows of my golden apples, and all the world would gladly steal them from me.

Perseus. I seek no golden fruit. If feats of arms delight you, know that I come but now from the conquest of the Gorgon.

Atlas. I have taken care that no one shall steal my golden apples. The garden of the Hesperides is inclosed by solid walls and guarded by a fierce dragon. As for you and your boastings of high descent and great deeds, I believe neither the one nor the other.

Perseus. Yet suffer a weary man to rest until day breaks.

Atlas. Begone! Neither Jupiter nor the exploits to which you falsely pretend can save you from my strength.

Perseus. Though you value my friendship so little, yet deign to accept a present. (Perseus turns his face away, and holds up the Gorgon's head.) Now is Atlas punished for his inhospitable reception of the stranger. He grows huger. He becomes a mountain. His beard and hair are changed into woods; his shoulders and his hands become mountain ridges; his bones become stones. Now he grows to an immense height, and upon his shoulders rests the whole heaven with its stars, — a burden which he must forever sustain.



PERSEUS AND ATLAS

PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA

CHARACTERS: Perseus, Cepheus, Phineus, 1 Noble;
Andromeda, Cassiopeia

SCENE I

(Perseus, continuing his journey from the kingdom of Atlas, arrives at the country of the Ethiopians, of which Cepheus is king. He finds Andromeda chained to a rock on the shore.)

Perseus. O virgin, tell me, I beseech, your name and the name of your country, and the reason why you are bound. That you are undeserving of those chains, I know. (Andromeda covers her face with her hands.) Tell me, I entreat you, who has doomed you to this cruel punishment. Surely you are innocent, and to punish the innocent is a crime.

Andromeda. I am Andromeda, daughter of Cepheus, king of the Ethiopians. My mother, Cassiopeia, claimed to be more beautiful than the sea nymphs. They in their anger sent a cruel monster to prey upon our coast.

Perseus. But why are you here, undefended, chained to a rock on the shore? Are you destined to be the monster's victim?

¹ This Phineus must not be confused with the Phineus who appears in "Jason."

Andromeda. When Cepheus asked the oracle how to save our country from the sad doom, the reply was that, to appease the nymphs, I must be sacrificed to the monster.

Perseus. Was there no brave man in the kingdom of Cepheus to slay the dragon and save a maiden from a fate so horrible?

Andromeda. None dared to risk his life in the attempt.

(As Andromeda speaks, the noise of the dragon is heard, and he appears, coming through the water. Andromeda screams. Cepheus and Cassiopeia hasten to Andromeda and embrace her.)

Cepheus. O wretched man that I am, to see you, my daughter, meet a fate so horrible!

Cassiopeia. Yet I, your mother, am far more wretched, since my hated beauty was the cause of this sorrow.

Cepheus. Know, my daughter, that I would gladly die in your stead. No one can doubt that.

Cassiopeia. How can I see you meet the terrible doom?

Perseus. There will be time enough for tears; this hour is all we have for rescue. The dragon scents his prey. I am Perseus, son of Jove, and slayer of the Gorgon; and, if the gods permit, I will win Andromeda by another deed of valor. Promise that she shall be mine if I conquer the dragon.

Cepheus. She shall be yours, with a kingdom for dowry.

Cassiopeia. See! the monster approaches, and Perseus leaps upon him. May the gods give him strength!

Cepheus. He is a goodly youth, and knows how to handle his sword.

Cassiopeia. By the wings on his feet Perseus flies from side to side when the monster turns upon him. I pray Perseus may conquer!

Cepheus. Well fought, Perseus! The battle is almost won. That was a deadly sword thrust.

Cassiopeia. Strike yet again, brave Perseus!

Cepheus. That was a finishing blow!

Cassiopeia. Perseus has killed the dragon! Andromeda is saved!

Perseus. Have I fairly won the maiden?

Cepheus. Surely the maiden's life belongs to him who saved it.

Andromeda. My deliverer!

(Perseus breaks the chain with his sword, and leads Andromeda from the rock.)

SCENE II

(The palace of *Cepheus*. The banquet is spread for the wedding feast of *Perseus* and *Andromeda*, and the feasting has begun.)

Cepheus. Other fathers have sorrow in giving their daughters in marriage. I have only joy, for I give her to him who preserved her life.



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Andromeda. Never a maiden loved her husband as I love. But for him I should have suffered the horrible doom.

Perseus. The gods give all things. They decreed that I should come to this shore in time to save the maiden.

Noble. Truly the gods give all things, and they gave Perseus a wondrous victory over Medusa. Tell us the story of the encounter.

Perseus. Long is the tale, but this I may say: I conquered by the aid of the winged sandals and the shield lent by the gods. As I neared Medusa's cave, I saw along the road the forms of men and beasts turned into stone at the sight of Medusa. Mindful of their fate, I looked always in the shield, and seeing there the horrible reflection, I struck while the Gorgon and all her serpents were asleep. Then with my waving wings I mounted on high, even to the stars. (A tumult is heard outside. Phineus, the betrothed of Andromeda, rushes in with his friends.)

Phineus. Behold! I come to seek revenge for the loss of Andromeda. My wife is stolen from me. (Phineus tries to hurl his lance at Perseus.)

Cepheus. What madness! Is this meet return for benefits so great? Perseus did not steal her from you. Already she was snatched from you, and would have perished ere this but for Perseus, her brave

deliverer. You gave her no aid. If your love was so great, you should have recovered her from the rock to which she was chained. Now she is his who offered his life to save her.

Phineus. She shall not remain his, if I can throw my spear. Upon him, my friends, with your swords!

Perseus. Since I am forced to do it, I will seek assistance from an enemy. If any of my friends are here, let them turn away their faces.

(Perseus lifts the Gorgon's head from his pouch. The friends of Phineus are turned into stone.)

Phineus. I call my friends by name; they do not answer me. I touch them; they are marble. (He extends his arms with averted face.) Perseus, you have conquered. Take away the stone-making face of Medusa; take it away, I entreat! For a wife I took arms. Your cause was the better, and I yield to you. Grant but my life; the rest shall be yours.

Perseus. What I am able to give you, most cowardly Phineus, that will I give. Lay aside your craven fears; you shall be hurt by no weapon. I will give you a monument to last forever, and in the house of Cepheus you shall always be seen, that my wife may comfort herself with the image of her betrothed.

(Perseus holds the head of Medusa toward Phineus, who immediately hardens into stone.)

JASON

CHARACTERS: Jason, Pelias, Phineus, Æëtes, Argonauts, Attendants, Courtiers, Citizens; Medea

SCENE I

(The palace of King Pelias of Thessaly. King Pelias is sitting at table, surrounded by friends and courtiers.)

Pelias. Fill high the goblets. This is a day of feasting and mirth. Let joy rule the hour. (A noise is heard outside.) Who dares disturb the royal presence by strife and loud words? Bring the offender hither. (Jason enters, wearing a leopard skin and one golden-stringed sandal.) At last! The oracle warned me to beware of the man with one shoe. Here he comes. Why does this intruder thrust himself into the royal palace?

Attendant. We tried to prevent him, but he must needs see the king face to face, half shod as he is.

Jason. I lost my sandal in crossing a river. I am Jason, and I come to claim the throne of my father, Æson. He yielded it to Pelias, his brother, only till I should be of age to take it. Give me my right, I pray.

Pelias. Where have you been these many years, that we have seen and heard nothing of you?

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Jason. Chiron, the centaur, has given me a home till I should be of age to demand my right.

Pelias. It is meet that I yield the throne to you, for only the sere of life remains to me, whereas you are in the flower of youth. Yet before I give up all, it is but just that you should perform some high deed, if for no other reason than to prove you are that Jason whom you call yourself.

Jason. Name the adventure.

Pelias. Go to Colchis, and find there the Golden Fleece. Bring it to me, and my kingdom is yours.

Jason. What is the Golden Fleece? I know nothing of it.

Pelias. Did not Chiron, your wise guardian, tell you of the Golden Fleece of Colchis? Listen, then. Long ago King Athamas lived in Thessaly, with his wife, Queen Nephele. They had a son, Phrixus, and a daughter, Helle. Queen Nephele feared danger for her children, and prayed for help. Then Jupiter sent a ram with golden fleece, and Nephele placed her two children on its back, trusting that it would take them to a place of safety. The ram sprang into the air, and went eastward till it came to the strait between Europe and Asia. There Helle fell from the ram's back into the sea. Phrixus reached his hand to save her, but she sank down below the waves. And now men call the strait for her, the Hellespont. The ram went on till it reached

Colchis. Phrixus sacrificed the ram to Jupiter, and gave the fleece to Æëtes, king of Colchis. Æëtes hung it on a tree in the sacred grove of Mars, and there it remains, guarded by a dragon that never sleeps.

Jason. I will set forth to find the Golden Fleece. With me shall go whoever loves danger and difficult deeds.

Pelias. How will you go to Colchis? The way is long, and the water is deep.

Jason. I will make Argus build me a vessel that shall hold fifty men. We will go together in quest of the Golden Fleece. Theseus, Castor and Pollux, and many more will come. Even Hercules will not disdain the adventure.

Pelias. Go if you will; whether you return or not, the future will show.

SCENE II

(Jason and his companions have arrived at Thrace, where Jason asks counsel of *Phineus* as to the way. For cruelty to his sons, *Phineus* has been deprived of sight by *Jupiter*, and left to be tormented by the Harpies.)

Phineus. I hear steps. Who comes to this lonely spot? Since Zeus in his anger placed me here, blind, I see naught, and hear only the unclean Harpies as they snatch away my food. But these should be human steps and human voices.

Jason. You speak truly, Phineus. I am Jason, son of King Æson, who lent his kingdom to Pelias, and I come with my companions on a dangerous quest. Because Argus built our boat, we named it the Argo, and men call us the Argonauts. We go to Colchis, to seek the Golden Fleece. Can you with sage counsel warn us of perils by the way?

Phineus. So you will rid me of the foul Harpies, my tormentors, I will give you counsel, lacking which you may never see Colchis.

Jason. I pledge my word that the Harpies shall be driven into the sea, if you will but direct us on our difficult way.

Phineus. I accept the bargain, and freely tell what danger awaits you, and how to escape it, trusting that you, like a true man, will keep your promise and drive away the unclean birds. It were shame to cheat a blind man.

Jason. Have no fears. I will give the word, and even while you are speaking, you shall be rid of them. (He goes out and instantly returns.) Even now the Harpies are driven to destruction by my companions. Speak, for time presses.

Phineus. At the entrance to the Euxine Sea are two rocky islands which float on the surface, tossing with the waves. When anything tries to pass

between them, they crash together with cruel jaws, and destroy, if possible, whatever is within them.

Jason. How can a boat and fifty men pass through such a channel unharmed?

Phineus. When you see the inhospitable strait close at hand, and mark the rocky islands heaving with the sea, let loose a dove to try the passage before you. Quick, on the rebound, ere the rocks are fairly open, drive on with full speed, and your boat shall pass safely through.

Jason. I thank you for the word, and hasten to try my way by it.

Phineus. And I thank the god that led Jason here to free me from my tormentors.

SCENE III

(The kingdom of Colchis. The Argonauts having reached Colchis, Jason seeks King Æëtes, to demand the Golden Fleece. On his way to the king, Jason meets Medea.)

Medea. Noble stranger, whence come you?

Jason. I come from Thessaly.

Medea. I know not who you are, but surely a bearing so high proclaims a steadfast heart, and courage to dare all things.

Jason. I seek King Æëtes.

Medea. What would you with King Æëtes, my father?

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Jason. Princess, I come to take away the Golden Fleece, which hangs in the sacred grove. I will ask the king's permission, but if he deny me, I will take it without his leave.

Medea. Why do you seek the Golden Fleece?

Jason. It is the price of my inheritance. Pelias reigns in my father's kingdom. When I demanded the throne that is mine by right, Pelias bade me bring him the Golden Fleece, in token that I am truly Jason.

Medea. The Golden Fleece is guarded by a dragon that never sleeps.

Jason. How can a man conquer the dragon?

Medea. Fear not. I will protect you from the perils that await you. My father will bid you yoke his fire-breathing bulls. This charm will defend you from them. (Medea gives the charm to Jason.) Next you must sow the teeth of the dragon that Cadmus killed, and plow them into the ground. When you sow the teeth, armed men will spring from the ground to attack you. Then you must throw this stone into the midst of the angry men, and they will leave you and fall to fighting one another. (Medea gives the stone.)

Jason. Will King Æëtes surely give me the Golden Fleece after all these labors?

Medea. That is a question no one can answer truly, but I can guide you to the grove of Mars, where the Fleece is kept.

Jason. What of the dragon that never sleeps?

Medea. I have a potion that will close his eyes.

Jason. By your powerful aid I will take the Golden Fleece, though King Æëtes bar my way with walls of brass and gates of iron. In return for your help, noble princess, I will make you my wife, and take you back with me to Thessaly, to be my queen.

Medea. Surely the gods willed it, when they sent you to this land.

SCENE IV

(A room in the palace of *King Æëtes*. The king is surrounded by his courtiers and attendants.)

Æëtes. Bid this Jason come into my presence. (An attendant goes out.) You say he brings many companions.

Courtier. O King Æëtes, a galley bearing fifty men came into port yesterday, and Jason is the leader.

(Jason enters.)

Æëtes. You are welcome to my kingdom, brave Jason. Your fame comes before you. What brings you to Colchis?

Jason. I come to ask a boon. King Pelias, who rules in my father's stead, promises to give me my right if I bring him the Golden Fleece. It hangs in your grove, and I humbly beg leave to take it away.

Æëtes. Do you know what perils await him who seeks to take the Golden Fleece?

Jason. I have heard of the watchful dragon which guards it.

Æëtes. To overcome him is a light task for your bravery, but know that there are other conditions. You must conquer my wild bulls and yoke them to the plow. Then you must sow some of the same dragon's teeth from which Cadmus raised a crop of armed men. After that, you may take the Golden Fleece, if the dragon that guards it will permit you.

Jason. I accept the conditions, King Æëtes.

SCENE V

(Æëtes and his subjects and the Argonauts are assembled in the grove of Mars to watch the exploits of Jason. The conflict goes on outside, and the people watch it.)

First Argonaut. See how calmly Jason comes to his task! I wish I were in his place.

Æëtes. I warrant he never encountered such bulls before.

First Citizen. Look! they dash toward Jason! 'T is all over with him.

Second Argonaut. Not yet. See how they cower before him! He speaks, and soothes them.

Third Argonaut. He pats their necks. See! he has slipped the yoke over their heads. He compels them to drag the plow. Well done, Jason! Oh, well done!

(The Argonauts shout to Jason.)

Second Citizen. This is marvelous. Here is some mystery.

Æëtes. Wait till he sows the dragon's teeth.

Fourth Argonaut. He sows them even now. Behold the spear points appearing! Quickly they grow into armed men who fall upon Jason. See! he fights ten at once. Surely mortal man can do no more. He will be overborne by numbers.

Medea (in an undertone). Will he never throw the stone? Has he lost it, or forgotten?

. Third Citizen. Ah, he throws a stone into the midst of the armed men. Look! they turn from him and begin fighting one another.

First Argonaut. They fall as rapidly as they rose. Soon not one will be alive.

Medea. The last one is fallen.

Second Argonaut. Jason is saved!

(The Argonauts shout exultingly and applaud Jason.)

SCENE VI

(The seashore. Jason is walking to and fro alone, when Medea comes to him.)

Medea. Haste, Jason! my father will attack the Argonauts to-morrow and burn your ship.

Jason. Would you have me give up the Golden Fleece?

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Medea. No; I will direct you to it. Follow the path till you come to the grove of Mars. There on a tree hangs the Golden Fleece, and beneath is the watchful dragon that guards it. If you sprinkle this drug upon him, he will sleep. Take the fleece from the tree, and I with your companions will be on the shore ready to sail.

Jason. Call the Argonauts. Make no noise. I go, secure in your powerful aid, to conquer the dragon and seize the Golden Fleece. The Golden Fleece is mine!



ATALANTA

CHARACTERS: Atalanta's Father, Hippomenes, Spectators;

Atalanta

SCENE I

(The home of Atalanta in Arcadia. Atalanta tells her father of her wish to remain single.)

Father. What did the voice of the oracle disclose, Atalanta? Is a long and happy life to be yours?

Atalanta. Yes, if I have courage and resolution to make it so. This was the command of the oracle: "Thou dost not need a husband, Atalanta. Avoid marriage; and yet thou wilt not avoid it, and while still living, wilt lose thyself."

Father. That is a hard decree, my daughter.

Atalanta. My mind is made up. I wish not to marry. I will live a happy single life in the shady woods.

Father. I fear your many suitors will not easily be turned away.

Atalanta. I have a plan which will free me from their troublesome demands. I will say to all suitors, "I promise to be the prize of him who shall conquer me in the race, but death must be the penalty of all who try and fail." They will not risk the hard condition.

Father. Do not be too sure; some may be rash enough to venture.

Atalanta. If they do, I can outstrip them in the race. From long following the chase, I am fearless and swift.

Father. Can you be stern enough to give sentence of death to those who fail?

Atalanta. Not I, but they themselves, will give the sentence. They know the conditions to which they are bound.

Father. Suppose one outstrips you; what then?

Atalanta. That will never be. I can outrun them all.

SCENE II

(The people are assembled to watch the race between *Atalanta* and her suitors. *Hippomenes* is among the spectators.)

First Woman. Who would have thought any could be found to run such a dangerous race?

Second Woman. See the suitors who have come! Not a woman living, were she beautiful as Venus herself, could tempt me to run such a risk, if I were a man.

Hippomenes. And I, being a man, marvel that any should seek a wife amid so great dangers. (Atalanta

throws her mantle aside.) Never have I seen so great beauty before! Pardon me, you at whom I wondered; I had not seen the reward for which you contend. Why is my chance in this contest left untried? Jove himself assists the daring.

(The race between Atalanta and the suitors begins. It goes on outside. The people watch.)

Third Woman. Is she not beautiful as she runs? First Man. The breeze seems to give wings to her feet.

First Woman. Her hair streams over her shoulders, and the gay fringe of her garment flutters behind her.

Second Man. A ruddy hue tinges the whiteness of her skin, such as a crimson curtain casts on a marble wall.

Second Woman. Look! Atalanta has won the race. I pity the poor suitors. Death for them, and the festal crown for Atalanta!

Hippomenes (rising, and addressing Atalanta). Why boast of conquering those laggards? I offer myself for the contest. If fortune shall give me the victory, you will not be disgraced in being outstripped by me, for I am of high descent, and my deeds are known. Or if I be defeated, in the conquest of Hippomenes you will win fame.

Atalanta (pityingly). What god can tempt one so young and beauteous to throw away his life? I pity

him, not for his beauty—yet he is beautiful—but for his youth. I wish he would give up the race, or else I hope he may outrun me.

Hippomenes. Help me, Venus, for you have led me on. Give three golden apples! They shall win the race for me. (Hippomenes picks up three golden apples and runs off.) I thank thee, Venus!

Father. Do not wait longer, Atalanta, lest the people grow impatient. Prepare for the race.

First Man. Now, Hippomenes, do your best!

Second Man. Haste! haste!

Third Man. You gain on her!

First Woman. Faster, Hippomenes!

Fourth Man. One more effort, and you leave her behind!

Second Woman. You are almost at the turning point, Hippomenes!

Fourth Man. Look! Hippomenes drops a golden apple to the ground.

Third Woman. She stoops to pick it up.

Second Man. Hippomenes is ahead!

Second Woman. Now Atalanta overtakes him!

First Man. He throws another apple. Again she stoops, and Hippomenes passes her.

Fourth Man. And again she overtakes him. The goal is near. Do your best, Hippomenes! Death or a bride!

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First Woman. Look at Hippomenes! See how he throws another apple obliquely to one side.

Third Man. She looks at the apple and hesitates. Now she turns aside for it, and Hippomenes wins the race!

(The spectators applaud Hippomenes.)



THESEUS

CHARACTERS: Theseus, Pittheus, Ægeus, Minos, Guards, Youths, Athenians; Æthra, Medea, Ariadne, Maidens

SCENE I

(Æthra and her son, Theseus, are at Trœzen, awaiting the time when Theseus shall have grown to manhood, when she has promised that he shall go to Athens to seek his father, King Ægeus. They are standing in a meadow, near a large stone.)

Theseus. Mother, I long for the time when I can move this stone, for then you say I may take what is under it, and go to seek Ægeus, my father. Every day I try, and yesterday I moved it ever so little from its place.

Æthra. Say you so, Theseus? Then the time is near when I must lose you, for a young man's strength grows fast.

Theseus. O mother, my heart is impatient to go forth among men. Look! I move the stone, heavy as it is, from the spot where it has lain so long. And see what is beneath! I find a chest, and in it are sandals and a sword. (Theseus puts the sandals on his feet, and girds on the sword.)

Æthra. Yes, Theseus, the hour has come when you must leave me and go to Athens.

(Pittheus enters.)

Theseus. Look, grandfather! I have moved the stone. Behold the sword and sandals that Ægeus left for me! Now I must seek him at Athens.

Pittheus. If you will go to Athens, Theseus, avoid the dangers of the land, and go by sea; so will you reach Athens the sooner. Dire perils beset the traveler who journeys by land. Periphetes, son of Vulcan, lies in wait with his deadly iron club. If you escape him, you will fall into the hands of Procrustes. He compels travelers to lie on his iron bedstead, and whether tall or short, Procrustes knows how to bring all to the measure of his bed.

Theseus. Yet for the danger's sake I will go by land. It were well that the son of Ægeus should achieve somewhat, before claiming brave Ægeus for his father. I fear not Periphetes or Procrustes. I will vanquish them both, or never set foot in Athens.

Pittheus. As well seek to chain the rushing wind as teach discretion to headstrong youth!

Æthra. Go, my son; court danger, and do brave deeds. Yet think sometimes of Æthra, the lonely mother, who stays behind.

Theseus. I go to win name and fame. When I have gained them, I will return; till then, farewell!

SCENE II

(The palace of Ægeus, in Athens. Ægeus and Medea are talking together in the royal palace.)

Medea. Know, O King Ægeus, that a stranger this day arrived in Athens, who calls himself Theseus, your son. All men are talking of his wonderful adventures. For myself, I have little faith in his claim. It is some vain brawler who seeks thus to advance his fortunes.

Ægeus. Will he come to the palace?

Medea. He comes on the instant, to claim your royal protection and be acknowledged your son.

Ægeus. What shall we do with the impostor?

Medea. I have a powerful draft which I will bring in a cup for you to hand him. After drinking that, he will not trouble you.

Ægeus. Is it sure?

Medea. Sure and deadly.

(A noise of voices is heard, and *Theseus* enters, wearing his father's sandals and ivory-hilted sword.)

Theseus (kneeling). O King Ægeus —

Medea (interrupting). The stranger is weary, and needs refreshment. Give him this cooling draft. (Medea hands the cup to Ægeus, who offers it to Theseus. Rising, he accepts the cup, and is about to drink, when Ægeus dashes it to the ground.)

Ægeus. The sword! the ivory-hilted sword!

Theseus. It was my father's sword; these were his sandals. When I was but a child, Æthra, my mother, told me of him, and showed me the stone which I should one day be strong enough to move. A month ago I rolled the stone from its place. Beneath it were the sword and sandals which Ægeus bade that I should bring to him, when I should have grown to manhood. I come to seek my father.

Ægeus. Those are Æthra's eyes. Come to me, my son! Blessed be the day that brought you hither!

(Ægeus embraces Theseus, and Medea, in anger and confusion, leaves the palace.)

SCENE III

(Ægeus and Theseus are in the royal palace.)

Theseus. Tell me, my father, what grievous calamity has befallen us. The air is full of lamentations, sobs, and groans, as if all Athens were mourning.

Ægeus. Alas! Theseus, this is the saddest day of the year, — the day when we draw lots to see which of the Athenian youths and maidens shall go to Crete to be devoured by the Minotaur.

Theseus. Why does Athens send this terrible tribute to the monster?

Ægeus. Minos, king of Crete, is my enemy. At his prayer the gods sent a pestilence upon Athens.

To be freed from the scourge, we must obey the cruel demand of Minos, and send seven youths and seven maidens each year to meet a dreadful doom.

Theseus (laying his hand on his sword). Cannot a man slay the monster?

Ægeus. It is hopeless, for Dædalus has built a labyrinth so blind that no man entering can find his way out, and in this labyrinth the Minotaur dwells. Whoever seeks to kill the monster is lost in the maze, and never heard of more.

Theseus. Let the people of Athens this year draw lots for six youths only. I will be the seventh, and either kill the Minotaur or die in the attempt.

Ægeus. Why should you, a prince, seek such a fate? Theseus. Because I am a prince, and heir to your throne, I freely offer myself to end the distress of your kingdom. And you, my father, king of Athens, must sacrifice your dearest, rather than let grief come to the poorest peasant.

Ægeus. Do not leave me alone. How can I send you to such a fate!

Theseus. When I return victorious, there will be joy in Athens over the deliverance of the young men and maidens.

Ægeus. Promise one thing. When the victims go each year to Crete, the ship that carries them has black sails in token of mourning. If you return safe,

tear down the dismal sails, and raise white ones, to say that the danger is past and all is well. Beholding them, we shall know that you are on your homeward way victorious, and will give you fitting welcome.

Theseus. I promise that snowy sails shall bear us homeward.

SCENE IV

(The palace of *Minos* in Crete. *Minos* sits on his throne, and *Ariadne* stands by his side. The guards bring in the captives, *Theseus* last.)

Minos. Lead them out. (Observing Theseus) Stay a moment; the others may go. You seem more calm than your fellow captives. Have you no fear of the doom that awaits you? Know you of the labyrinth which Dædalus built so cunningly that he himself could not find the way out? Even if you escape the Minotaur, which is impossible, you can never return through the mazes of the labyrinth. Does not all this appall you?

Theseus. I have offered my life in a good cause, and I give it gladly. But I tell you this, King Minos: you seem to me a more hideous monster than the Minotaur himself. I would not be in your place for all your robes of majesty and your golden throne. Does not your heart reproach you for your cruelty?

Minos. Guards, lead this free-spoken youth away! And when the Minotaur makes his breakfast of

Athenian youths and maidens, let this boaster be the first morsel.

Ariadne (throwing herself at the king's feet in supplication). Father, I beseech you, set these innocent captives free. Spare their lives or the wrath of Heaven will punish you. Let them go, one and all, back over the sea to Athens, their home. Let them, returning, gladden the eyes of those who mourn their loss.

Minos. The Minotaur would miss his dainty meal.

Ariadne. Let the horrible monster starve if he will! So shall earth be rid of one more torment. At least, father, spare this young man who spoke so bravely. Methinks his courage deserves a better fate than you design for him.

Minos. Peace, foolish girl! You know little of affairs like this. Go hence, and forget the Athenian captives, whom the Minotaur shall surely devour before another day has passed.

Ariadne. Have pity this once, my father!

Minos. Not another word. Guards, take him away!

SCENE V

(Theseus is walking to and fro in his dungeon.)

Theseus. My companions are sleeping, but I cannot rest. I must see if there is not some way to save them. The brave man finds a way or makes one.

(Ariadne enters.)

Ariadne. Prince Theseus, I come to save you. It is small wonder that you do not sleep to-night.

Theseus. I have little time to live, and would not waste any of that little in sleep.

Ariadne. I will set you free.

Theseus. I thank you, noble maiden, but I will not leave Crete till I have killed the Minotaur, and freed Athens from the tribute under which she groans.

Ariadne. I knew that would be your choice, so I brought your sword, which the guards took away. You will need it. I pray the gods you may use it well!

Theseus. If I were sure of getting out of the labyrinth, I should have little fear of the monster. But how can a man mark his way in such a place?

Ariadne. Listen! I will lead you through the grove to the wall, and show you the secret entrance to the labyrinth. He who goes but a few steps from the entrance may wander there a lifetime without returning to it. Yet the Minotaur is in the very center of the labyrinth, and there, Theseus, you must seek him.

Theseus. How can I find him? Hark! I hear a roaring, as of a wild beast.

Ariadne. That is the roar of the Minotaur. You must follow that sound through the windings of the labyrinth until you find him.

Theseus. How can I hope to find my way out?

Ariadne. I will give you one end of a silken thread, and as you go through the perilous maze, I will stand at the entrance, holding the other end. If you are victorious, the thread will lead you to me. Farewell, Theseus, and may your arm be strong!

SCENE VI

(A street in Athens. *Theseus* and his companions have just arrived in Athens, and are eagerly welcomed by the Athenians.)

First Athenian. Have you indeed escaped from the dreadful monster?

Second Athenian. Has Theseus killed the Minotaur? First Youth. Yes, Theseus has killed the monster, and freed us all. Rejoice! Athens is freed from the cruel tribute!

Second Youth. No more shall the yearly lamentations be heard in Athens—parents mourning because sons and daughters must be sacrificed to the rage of Minos.

First Maiden. Theseus has saved us. All praise to Theseus!

Third Athenian. How could he find his way through the labyrinth?

Third Youth. Ariadne, daughter of Minos, gave him a silken thread for guide.

Fourth Athenian. What said King Minos to that? Second Maiden. We stayed not to see. Ariadne warned us to flee before her father should discover what she had done, else she would not answer for our lives.

Theseus. Let us dance, and show the Athenians the labyrinth, by our dancing.

(Youths and maidens join in a labyrinthine dance.)

Third Athenian. A brave dance, truly, winding in and out like the labyrinth of Dædalus.

Theseus. Where is Ægeus? Too long have I tarried on the way to his throne. Yet I thought the king would have been on the shore to greet us when we returned. (The Athenians look at one another silently.) I trust he is well. Why do you not speak and tell me that my father is well?

First Athenian. You came with black sails.

Theseus. And now, too late, I remember that I promised to hoist white sails if we lived to return. Did Ægeus grieve sorely when he saw the black sails once more? You do not speak. Answer me.

Second Athenian. Day after day King Ægeus went to the Acropolis to watch for your return. Hope and fear strove in his breast, as he strained his eyes for the homeward sails. At last the bark appeared far off, borne by sable sails. Then Ægeus, broken-hearted,

had no wish to live; he threw himself down the steep precipice, that he might join his son in Hades.

Theseus. I am of all men most miserable! Spent by deadly combat with the monster, fleeing in haste from the wrath of Minos, I forgot the white sails that were to be the signal of our safe return. Woe is me!

Fourth Athenian. Peace to the soul of Ægeus, and long live King Theseus!

' (Cries of "Long live Theseus, our king!")

Theseus. Theseus bids you go to your homes, to offer prayers for Ægeus, and thanksgiving for our deliverance. The ship which brought us safe from Crete shall be preserved forever, each failing timber being replaced with care; and every year a sacred embassy of Athenian youths shall be sent to worship the god of Delos in memory of our deliverance. To your homes! Pray for the soul of Ægeus!



DÆDALUS AND ICARUS

CHARACTERS: Dædalus, Icarus, Cocalus

SCENE I

(Dædalus, having offended Minos, is shut up in his old age with his son Icarus, in the labyrinth he himself made for the Minotaur.)

Icarus. Must we stay here forever, father?

Dædalus. Can you find your way through the labyrinth, Icarus?

Icarus. You know I cannot, but if you built this place and know all its windings, why can you not lead us out?

Dædalus. So cunningly did I build it, that not even I can find my way through the maze. In years to come, men will laugh at Dædalus, who built the labyrinth for his own prison.

Icarus. I am tired of staying in this trap. I would go out into the free air where other men live, enjoying the society of their kind.

Dædalus (musing). Even if we could escape from the labyrinth, we could not leave Crete. Water hems us in all around, and Minos has sentinels at watch on every side. The free air! True, the air is free. Minos may guard the land and the sea, but the skies, at least, are open. By that way we will go. Let Minos possess everything besides; he does not sway the air.

Icarus. What do you mean, father? Will you build a ladder to the clouds?

Dædalus. Do you see that bird yonder? We will go as she goes, over men's heads.

Icarus. But the bird has wings.

Dædalus. Men may have wings if they will make them.

Icarus. But will the wings bear us up? And how can we direct our flight?

Dædalus. How does the bird ride on her wings and steer her flight? The bird shall teach us.

SCENE II

(The workshop of *Dædalus*. *Icarus* watches *Dædalus* as he fashions the wings.)

Dædalus. See how I arrange the feathers in order, laying them in even rows, the shorter succeeding the longer, so as to form an increasing surface. The larger ones I secure with thread, and the smaller with wax, and the whole curves gently like the wings of a bird. Run, Icarus, and bring me the feathers which the wind has blown away.

Icarus. Here they are, father. Already they are impatient to fly abroad. I like best to play with the wax.

Dædalus. You press your fingers upon it when I would be using it to fasten the feathers. Stand farther off, and keep your hands behind you, unless you can teach them not to hinder my work.

Icarus. I care more for these, because they are my own wings.

Dædalus. Have a care that you do not spoil them ere they are finished. Should you like to see me flying from Crete while you stayed behind?

Icarus. I doubt, sometimes, whether I shall have courage to fly. The stars are very high.

Dædalus. How does the young bird have courage to leave its nest? Even as the parent bird instructs its young, so will I teach you and cheer your flight.

Icarus. When shall we be ready to try our wings? Dædalus. To-morrow, if all goes well, they will be finished. For one day you shall wear your wings in short flights, here in these lofty spaces of the labyrinth, with me by your side to direct you. The next day we will take our way from Crete, in spite of King Minos and all his guards.

Icarus. Think how the foolish plowman will strain his eyes to watch our flight! He will believe we are gods, when we mount upon our pinions. The shepherd will tell his neighbor he saw Apollo and Mercury flying over his field in the bright sunshine.

Dædalus. One thing, Icarus, I have charged you many times to remember, and I repeat it now. When you fly, be sure that you keep a middle course. If you fly too low, the damp will clog your wings, and if too high, the heat of the sun will melt them.

Icarus. I will try to follow your instructions, but when I am once in the air, methinks it will be easier to fly high than low. Wings are for soaring, not creeping. Often have I envied the eagle, Jove's bird, as it rises high, beating the air, untamed by the sun. If I were a bird, I would be an eagle.

Dædalus. Yet since you are to fly with man's wings, not eagle's wings, once again I caution you to be wise in your flight, and put no test upon them that they will not bear.

Icarus. And once again I promise to obey your counsel.

SCENE III

(Dædalus, mourning the death of Icarus, comes to Sicily, where King Cocalus receives him kindly.)

Cocalus. Whoever you are, whether god or man, that come to my shore flying with wings, yet wearing a mournful face, I bid you welcome to this island of Sicily over which I reign.

Dædalus. Then it is King Cocalus who speaks. Cocalus. You say truly.

Dædalus. I am Dædalus, the Athenian, builder of the labyrinth. Wearying of me in my old age, Minos confined me in the prison I had built, and Icarus, my son, was with me there. That we might gain our freedom, I made wings with which we flew from Crete. How shall I tell the sad tale?

Cocalus. You come without your son.

Dædalus. I shall never see him more. Forgetting my counsel and exulting in his career, he soared too high. The nearness of the blazing sun softened the wax which fastened the feathers. Ere he could guide his flight to earth, before he knew his danger, the loosened wings dropped from him. He fluttered with his arms, but no feathers remained to hold the air. Even while he uttered cries to me, his father, he sank into the sea. I called, "Icarus, Icarus, where are you?" Only the feathers remained floating on the water.

Cocalus. A wondrous tale and a sad one! I grieve for your loss. Rest here in peace after your labor that ended so fatally. Here shall be your home.

Dædalus. Grateful to the bruised heart is tender sympathy. Here will I dwell, cheered by your protection. I will build a temple to Apollo, and in it, as an offering to the god, I will hang these wings.

ALCESTIS

Characters: Jupiter, Apollo, Admetus, Hercules, Father, Attendant

SCENE I

(Mount Olympus. Æsculapius, the physician, son of Apollo, has employed his skill in restoring the dead to life, thus incurring the displeasure of Pluto. Jupiter answers Pluto's complaint by launching a thunderbolt at Æsculapius. Apollo takes vengeance for the death of his son by shooting his arrows at the Cyclopes, who forged the thunderbolt. Jupiter summons Apollo before him to receive his decree of punishment.)

Jupiter. Be less free with your rebellious arrows hereafter, Apollo. When you shoot my innocent workmen, the Cyclopes, you aim your arrows at me.

Apollo. A father, beholding his dear son laid low by the thunderbolt, may be pardoned if his eyes are dimmed and his arrows wander astray.

Jupiter. The fault was yours in giving your son Æsculapius such skill in healing that he restored the dead to life. Pluto complained to me that his kingdom was invaded. When gods and mortals contend for sovereignty, let mortals take heed to themselves. My thunderbolt found Æsculapius, as you know.

Apollo. And my arrows found the Cyclopes, who forged the thunderbolt, as you know.

Jupiter. Still haughty and rebellious? It would have been wiser to plead for forgiveness. Know that Jupiter is still king of gods as well as of men, and, lest you forget this, receive your punishment. You shall be degraded from your high estate, and become the servant of a mortal for the space of one year. So may you learn submission and humility.

Apollo. I will show that a god can be humble.

SCENE · II

(The palace of Admetus. Apollo, obeying Jupiter's command to become the servant of a mortal for a year, enters into the service of Admetus, king of Thessaly, as shepherd.)

Admetus. Many times I have blessed the day that brought you to me. It is not alone that you are the most faithful herdsman that ever man had, but you are wise and strong, ready always to give friendly aid. Now, however, I need help that it is beyond your power to render.

Apollo. Does some giant threaten to ravage your kingdom and steal your flocks?

Admetus. I wish it were no worse than that; I think your arm would be strong enough to slay the giant. An impossible task is laid upon me.

Apollo. It will do no harm to tell me the nature of the task.

Admetus. I love the maiden Alcestis, daughter of Pelias. She has many suitors, and Pelias is friendly to none. To-day he made known the hard condition by which he will choose. He will give the hand of the maiden to him who shall come for her in a chariot drawn by lions and boars.

Apollo. Is that all?

Admetus. You mock my distress. Know that I have long loved Alcestis truly; I think she is not averse to my suit, but no mortal can fulfill the hard condition. Think you lions and boars will submit their necks patiently to the yoke? Will they travel in meek, obedient course, tamely drawing the chariot behind them?

Apollo. I will yoke the lions and boars, and drive them in the chariot. You shall ride beside me, to claim your promised bride.

Admetus. Bear with me if I say I never expect to claim her on those terms. But if you bring the chariot to my door harnessed to its unwonted team, be sure that I will ride gladly to my happy fortune.

SCENE III

(Admetus, having married Alcestis and lived happily many years, falls grievously ill. Apollo visits him.)

Apollo. Courage, Admetus! I bring you a reprieve. The Fates consent to spare your life on condition that some one can be found to die in your stead.

Admetus. My friend of many years, always bringing me good! What words can speak my thanks? May I indeed stay a little longer on this earth to enjoy the cheerful light?

Apollo. Remember, there is a condition.

Admetus. What condition? Oh, the ransom! The Fates release me if another will die for me. Never fear for that. You little know how many faithful followers have said they would gladly lay down their lives for me. There will be no difficulty in finding some one to take my place willingly.

Apollo. Still it is well to inquire without delay. Spread the news abroad; see who will offer first.

Admetus (to an attendant). Let it be told in my palace that King Admetus will be saved from death if some one loves him well enough to take his place. So the Fates permit.

Apollo. I like not to leave you till the ransom is settled. Death is crafty and cunning; he will not be cheated.

Admetus. The difficulty will be in deciding who shall have the honor of giving himself up for me. Many will be glad to purchase a glorious name at such a price.

Apollo. Yet all beings cling to life; dear are their wives and children to all men.

Admetus. I believe you doubt the ease with which a substitute can be found. I have no fears.

Apollo. A man will expose his life in battle, borne on the common tide of rage, or desire for victory, but it is a different thing to make the sacrifice in cold blood. I will return when your news has had time to make its way; we will see how the offer is accepted.

SCENE IV

(The home of Admetus. Apollo inquires how the news is received, and if a ransom for Admetus has been found.)

Apollo. Has any of your courtiers been found willing to offer up his life to save yours?

Admetus. You knew men better than I. Not one of all my court was willing to proffer his life.

Apollo. You have relatives; your parents are aged. Surely they were willing to forego life that you might be spared.

Admetus. All had some reason that kept them here on earth, some duty to perform — wife to cherish, children to maintain, work to do. As for my father and mother, whether cowardice of soul or lack of love

prevented the sacrifice, I know not. Arrived where life should end, they did neither will nor dare to die for their son. Put to the test, they showed the selfishness that was in them. As for me, I cannot understand such baseness, for it is foreign to my nature. I can only say that I no longer own them for my parents, since they thus cast me off. I hate them both.

Apollo. Was no one found great-hearted enough to take your place?

Admetus (sobbing). Yes, one there was, who, when those who gave me life refused to prolong it, offered to die in my place. Alcestis, my dear wife, best of women, gives herself to death. She sickens as I revive, and sinks downward to the grave.

Apollo. O Admetus! I pity, but I cannot help. But do not abandon hope. Remember that I said there yet was hope. And so, farewell!

SCENE V

(Just after the death of Alcestis, Hercules arrives as a guest at the palace of Admetus. Fearing that Hercules will not stay if he knows of the death of Alcestis, Admetus does not tell him.)

Hercules. Is Admetus within?

Father. Yes, my son is in the house. What brings you to Thessaly?

Hercules. I must capture Diomedes' car and drive off his four horses.

Father. That is no easy task; those horses eat men. Hercules (laughing). A labor dear to my heart! My lot is likely to go hard and harder, high and higher yet.

Admetus (quietly and composedly). Hail, Hercules, son of Zeus!

Hercules. Admetus, king of Thessaly, I salute you! For whom are these signs of mourning that I see in your house?

Admetus. We have met with a loss in our home. Hercules. Heaven grant it may be none dear to you.

Admetus. Neither father, mother, nor children, but an alien, though related to my house.

Hercules. I come at an ill time. Would that I found you gay, not grieving. I will seek other hosts, for a guest is out of place among mourners.

Admetus. I cannot let you go to the hearth of any other man. We will lead you to guest rooms remote from ours. There you shall feast and rest.

Hercules. If you will not let me go my way, let it be as you say.

SCENE VI

(Hercules, feasting in the room prepared for him, is served by an attendant, who tells him who it is that Admetus mourns.)

Hercules. Give me meat; I am fatigued and famished. Now the ivied goblet! Now the vine wreath in my hair! So I come from labor to repose; soon

out again into the struggle I go. I make the most of this moment of rest, letting soul and body gain strength for new labors soon to follow. Why, fellow, do you look so solemn? A servant should not be sour-faced to guests, but do the honors smilingly.

Attendant. I know that is true, but there is a reason why I find it hard to smile.

Hercules. Your master told me it was no near relation whom he had lost, — only an alien.

Attendant. An alien, but most intimate! Were it not peculiar sorrow that has fallen on my master's household, I should not have felt it amiss to see you feast.

Hercules. What! has Admetus kept the truth from me? Tell me who has died; some child or the aged father?

Attendant. Know, O guest, that it is the wife of Admetus, who has perished.

Hercules. What do you say? And he received me all the same!

Attendant. Yes, for he holds you in such reverence that he would not turn you from his door.

Hercules. What a loss! I half guessed it, seeing his grief, but he persuaded me against my wish, and forced me to enter his doors. And did I carouse in the hall of my friend who had suffered so? And do I revel yet with wreath on my head? How could you

hold your peace so long, and never tell me the sorrow that had come upon the house? Where has he gone to bury her? I must go and find her.

Attendant. By the road that leads to Larissa you will see the tomb, a carved sepulcher.

Hercules (plucking the wreath from his head and treading upon it). I must save Alcestis. I will lie in wait for Death; I will seize upon him, and struggle with him until I force him to give her up. If I miss him,—if he comes not to the tomb,—I will go to the dwelling place of Pluto, and demand Alcestis. I will bring her back and restore her to her husband, my host that cared for me and honored me, though stricken with sore sorrow! He shall not say the man whom he befriended was base.

SCENE VII

(Hercules returns to Admetus, happy and strong, though showing the marks of desperate struggle, and holding a shrouded form in his arm.)

Hercules. Admetus, I grieve that you did not tell me the truth when I came to your house of mourning, but suffered me to feast and revel instead of sorrowing with you. Yet let that pass. Take this woman and keep her till I return from my next labor. She was the prize of hard toil. If I should never come back, keep her in your household.

Admetus. Ah me! she has the form of Alcestis. Take her from my sight, lest she awaken memories too hard to bear.

Hercules. I wish I had the power to lead your true wife up into the light again, and give her back to you.

Admetus. Well I know you would, if it were possible. But there is no hope; the dead come not back to life.

Hercules. Your loss is great, but time will soften the grief. The day will come when a new wife will bring consolation.

Admetus. Hush, friend, I entreat you! What do you say? I cannot believe my ears!

Hercules. Do you resolve never to take another wife?

Admetus. Never! May I die when I forget my true wife, Alcestis!

Hercules. Nevertheless, receive this woman whom I bring.

Admetus. Must I obey?

Hercules. I wish to place her in your hands.

Admetus. The servants will lead her in.

Hercules. I trust her to none but yourself. Hold her fast! Take off the veil, and see Alcestis, silent and smiling before you. I bring her to you in proof that Hercules, son of Zeus, was a worthy guest to entertain!

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

CHARACTERS: Orpheus, Pluto; Nymphs, Proserpina

SCENE I

(Orpheus was the son of Apollo and Calliope, muse of poetry. His father gave him a lyre and taught him to play upon it, and nothing could withstand the charm of his music. Not only his fellow mortals but wild beasts listened to his strains with delight. The trees crowded round him to listen to his lyre, and the rocks were softened by the sweetness of the harmony. Orpheus is met by the nymphs, who come to give him tidings of his wife, Eurydice.)

Orpheus. Where is Eurydice?

First Nymph. Unhappy Orpheus, prepare for evil tidings.

Orpheus. She left me but now, to wander in the woods with you, her loved nymphs.

Second Nymph. Often she wandered with us by the stream and through the woods.

Orpheus. I pray you, be merciful. If your tidings are evil, do not make them worse by delay.

Third Nymph. Yet the tongue refuses to speak the sad truth.

First Nymph. The loved Eurydice is no more! Orpheus. The blow has fallen! Whatever ills remain to bear will be light beside this.

Third Nymph. Running with us through the fields, she stepped upon a poisonous snake concealed in the grass. The fangs pierced her foot, and she died before we could bring her home.

Second Nymph. Her last thoughts were of you. Dying, she breathed your name.

Orpheus. Not another, but part of myself, I lose. My soul sits dumb in the shadow.

First Nymph. It was foretold that you should lose her.

Second Nymph. Often has she told us of your sad nuptials. Hymen brought no happy omens. His torch gave forth smoke, which brought prophetic tears to the eyes. She dreamed of an early death, yet grieved at the thought of leaving you.

Orpheus. Kind friends, I thank you for your words. I know you wish to comfort me.

Third Nymph. Yet well we know that words are unavailing. They are a mocking to him that mourns as you mourn. None know that better than we, for we know what you lose.

Orpheus. Was there no power in heaven or earth to save her? What had Eurydice done to merit such a doom? Gentle she was and loving, innocent as the flowers. Some god must have envied our happiness, and sent death to take her from me. The all-seeing sun in his rounds found nothing sweeter than the

lost Eurydice. I rebel against fate. I cannot give her up. I will go to Hades and seek her among the ghosts. Pluto shall give her back to me!

SCENE II

(Orpheus descends to the world of spirits, and presents himself with his lyre before Pluto and Proserpina.)

Orpheus (accompanying his words with the lyre). O rulers of the underworld, to which we all must come at last, hear my words. I come to find Eurydice, my wife, whose young life the poisonous viper has brought to an untimely end. I tried to endure her loss, but love was stronger than my will. By the silence of these boundless realms, by the love that united you two, I implore you, join again the severed thread of the life of Eurydice. To you we all belong. Having stayed but a little while above, we all hasten to your domain. Sooner or later she will be yours; but grant her to me, I beseech you, till she shall have enjoyed the due term of mortal life. If you deny me, I will not return. It is better to live in Hades with Eurydice than on earth without her.

Proserpina. Heard you ever such a moving lay, Pluto? Look! the very spirits weep. The cheeks of the Furies are wet with tears. Pluto, can you resist such a prayer? Give back Eurydice to her husband.

Pluto. Call Eurydice. (Eurydice comes slowly by reason of her wound.) Listen, Orpheus. Your love has conquered death, and Eurydice may return, on one condition. Turn not back to look at her till you have passed the Avernian valleys and reached the upper air. Heed well my words, for if you look back, you lose Eurydice forever.

Orpheus. My mouth cannot utter my thanks, but the gods know what is in the hearts of men. Our grateful prayers shall rise night and day. Come, beloved, let us seek the cheerful light.

SCENE III

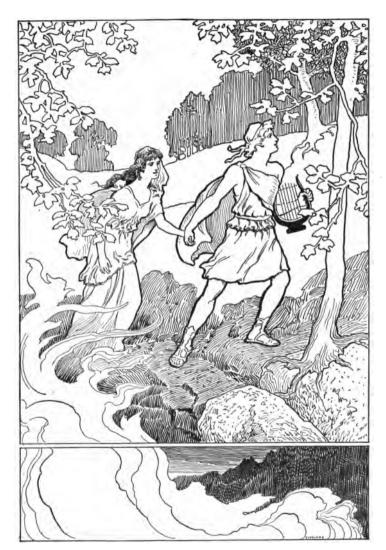
(Eurydice follows Orpheus till they have almost reached the upper world, when Orpheus, forgetting the command of Pluto, looks back for a moment, and Eurydice sinks down to the world of spirits.

Orpheus goes to a mountain in Thrace.)

Orpheus. Now surely am I the most unhappy of created beings! The gods make me their plaything, and raise me from misery to bliss, only to plunge me in despair again. Such cruelty dwells not with men; only the gods can so delight in beholding wretchedness. They have no pity.

(A nymph enters.)

Nymph. What unhappy mortal disturbs the air with his lamentations? Is it Orpheus, still sorrowing for Eurydice?



ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Orpheus. It is Orpheus whom you see, miserable with a grief whose keenness you cannot guess.

Nymph. Yet to sorrow overmuch is unwise. The loved Eurydice is gone to the realm of shades, and tears cannot bring her back.

Orpheus. Stop, ere your words drive me to frenzy! So it is always with well-meaning consolers. They plant stings where they would soothe. Listen to the saddest tale ever heard by mortal ears. Know that I followed my lost Eurydice to the kingdom of Pluto, and besought him to restore her to me. Moved by my prayer, he consented, on condition that I should not look back to behold her till we reached the light of the sun. Was ever such bliss granted to sorrowing mortals before? Transported with happiness, I led her through the Avernian valleys, over the perilous path. Alas! even on the verge of light, - when, in a moment more, I should have clasped her in these arms, - impatient to behold her, I looked back; and instantly she sank downward to the place from which she came, stretching out her arms to me and saying, "Farewell!"

Nymph. To lose Eurydice once was a cruel wound, but the second loss is a grief the like of which man never suffered before.

Orpheus. In vain I returned to the dark river and besought Charon to take me across once more;

he refused my entreaties. Seven days I lingered on the bank without food or sleep, but the cruel gods were deaf to my cries, and I saw Eurydice no more. Now at last I return to earth, mourning the truest, most loving wife that ever man lost. Sometimes I forget my grief, and remember only the moment when Pluto gave back Eurydice. Then the bright memory fades, and I clasp the air, hearing her voice as it speaks, "Farewell!"



ARION

CHARACTERS: Arion, Periander, Seamen

SCENE I

(The palace of *Periander*, king of Corinth. *Arion*, the musician, tells *Periander* that he will compete for the prize in Sicily.)

Arion. Periander, best of friends, prepare to lose me for a while. A desire has seized me to go to Sicily with the other musicians, and compete for the prize.

Periander. The court of Corinth can ill spare you, Arion. Here is your place, and not in Sicily.

Arion. My heart thirsts for fame. You know we poets and musicians are not as other men. We are careless of comfort, but to hear our name in men's mouths is the breath of life to us.

Periander. Nay, I can answer you on this same question of fame. Here at Corinth you are known and prized. He who goes abroad to strive may lose.

Arion. A wandering life best suits the free heart of a poet. The talent which a god bestowed on me, I would fain use for the pleasure of others. It is better to dare the attempt, even if I lose.

Periander. The ocean is treacherous. Who knows whether you will ever return?

Arion. Every day brave men trust their lives to the sea, and why should not I? Would you make a coward of me? Dismiss your fears. Soon shall you forget them, as you greet me returning. We will thank the gods with lavish offerings, and merry will we be at the festal board.

Periander. Since I cannot keep you here, I must perforce let you go to Sicily, though I approve not your going. Farewell! A quick and safe return!

SCENE II

(On shipboard. Arion has won the prize, and is on his homeward way.)

Arion. The wind and sea favor me. Not a cloud dims the sky. Soon I shall embrace Periander once more and laugh at his fears. I wish men were as deserving of trust as the ocean. I like not the faces of these seamen; they look hungrily at me, as if they were thinking of my new-found wealth.

First Seaman. Arion, you cannot take your gold back to Corinth.

Arion. Would you have my gold? I give it to you. Second Seaman. We want something more. We must have your life.

Arion. My life can do you no good. Take my gold, and welcome. I willingly pay that price for my life, which is surely worth more to me than to you.

Third Seaman. We cannot let you go. How could we escape from Periander if he should know that we had robbed you? Your gold would not make us happy if, on returning home, we must always live in fear.

Arion. Grant me, then, this prayer: since you are determined to have my life, let me die as I have lived, as becomes a bard. When I shall have sung my death song, and my harp strings shall cease to vibrate, then I will bid farewell to life and yield, uncomplaining, to my fate. Suffer me to arrange my dress. Apollo will not listen, unless I be clad in my minstrel garb.

First Seaman. Let him have his way. For myself, I would gladly hear his lyre that all the world loves, and if he likes to change his dress, let him do it. Surely it makes no difference to us what clothes he wears.

SCENE III

(Corinth. The palace of *Periander*. *Arion* tells *Periander* of his wonderful escape.)

Periander. A thousand welcomes to Corinth, Arion! The sight of you gladdens my heart. Do you bring the prize with you?

Arion. I won the prize, yet I bring it not back with me. False knaves have robbed me of it, but thousands heard my song, and the fame is mine.

ARION 185

Periander. When did your ship arrive in port? I had no notice of its coming.

Arion. I came by a strange craft, Periander, the like of which man never traveled by before. Listen to my story. The contest over, I embarked on the homeward voyage, with the treasure my victory had brought me. The ocean was favorable, but men were treacherous. I overheard dark hints, and found the sailors were plotting to obtain my wealth.

Periander. My heart prophesied evil in store for you!

Arion. Soon they came to me and told me I must die. I begged for leave to array myself in my poet's dress, that I might sing my death song. My prayer was granted. Clad in gold and purple, with jewels on my arms, with a golden wreath on my brow, with my hair flowing loose and perfumed with odors, I took the lyre, striking it with the ivory wand. I drank the morning air, and the seamen gazed at me as I went to the vessel's side, looked at the blue sea, and sang: "Soon shall I join the happy souls in Elysium. I must away, but I will not fear. The gods look down upon us. Ye who slay me, unoffending, your time of trembling shall come. Sea nymphs, receive your guest, who throws himself upon your mercy!" So saying, I sprang into the deep sea. The waves covered me, while the seamen held on their way, thinking I had perished. Periander. Unfeeling wretches! I marvel they should think themselves safe for a moment after such a crime. The eyes of the gods are everywhere.

Arion. And now comes the strangest part of my tale. When I sang, and played upon the lyre, the inhabitants of the deep came to listen; dolphins followed the ship as if chained by a spell. As I struggled in the waves, a dolphin offered me his back, and, when I mounted upon it, carried me safe to shore.

Periander. I will erect a monument of brass at the spot where you landed.

Arion. So shall the kind service of the dolphin and the friendship of Periander for Arion have equal honor. I gave to the dolphin all I could, — my thanks, — then bade him farewell. I hastened to Corinth, lyre in hand, forgetting my losses, thankful for what remained, — for my life, my lyre, and most of all for you, Periander, my friend!

Periander. Your words fill me with amazement. Shall such wickedness triumph? We must punish the guilty ones. Remain in concealment, so that they will have no suspicion that you are alive. When I summon them, you shall confront them. They will not dare to deny their guilt.

Arion. Be it as you will.

SCENE IV

(Corinth. Periander calls the guilty seamen before him.)

Periander. Did not Arion go to Sicily in your ship? First Seaman. We carried him safe to Sicily, so please your worship.

Second Seaman. It was said that he won the prize. I know not how that may be. We seamen know little of such matters.

Periander. Did he take homeward passage with you? I look anxiously for his return.

Third Seaman. We left him well and prosperous, in Tarentum.

(Arion steps forth and confronts them.)

First Seaman. See him arrayed in gold and purple, adorned with jewels, the lyre in his hand!

(They fall prostrate before Arion.)

Third Seaman. We meant to murder him for his gold! He has become a god!

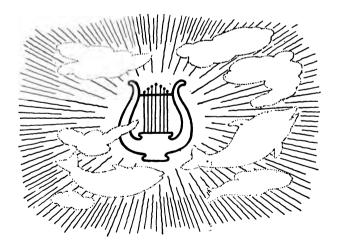
Second Seaman. Open, Earth, and swallow us up! Periander. He lives, the master of the lay! As for you, base men, prepare to receive the punishment meet for your offense.

Third Seaman (clinging to Arion's robe). Save us! Periander. You had no mercy upon him. Why should he pity you?

Arion. Invoke not the spirit of vengeance, Periander. I do not wish their blood. We poets live in a world into which hate and revenge cannot enter. The light of heaven is sweet; do not rob them of it.

Periander. Now you see something better than gold and gems, — better than all the wealth you coveted, — a noble heart. Take your lives, a gift from him you would have destroyed. But leave my kingdom; let me never see your evil faces more!

Arion. In whatever land you find a home, there the sweet air of heaven will blow, bringing divine music. Pray that you may learn to hear it; so shall you be cleansed of your crime through repentance.



PRONOUNCING INDEX

The letters are marked as in Webster's dictionary.

āle, senāte, cāre, ăm, āccount, ārm, āsk, sofā; ēve, ēvent, ĕnd, recēnt, makēr; īce, ill; ōld, ōbey, ôrb, ŏdd, cŏnnect; ūse, unite, ūrn, up; food, foot, ink

Acropolis (d-krop/o-lis) Admetus (ăd-mē'tŭs) Æëtes (ē-ē'tēz) Ægeus (ē'jūs) Æolus (ē'ð-lŭs) Æsculapius (čs-ků-lā/pĭ-ŭs) Æson (ē'sŏń) Æthra (ē'thra) Agenor (d-jē'nŏr) Alcestis (ăl-sĕs'tĭs) Amphion (Am-fi'on) Andromeda (ăn-drŏm'ē-da) Apollo (d-pŏl'ō) Arachne (d-rak'ne) Arethusa (ar-t-thu'sd) Ariadne (ăr-I-ăd'nē) Argonaut (är'gð-nôt) Argos (är'gŏs) Argus (är'gŭs) Arion (d-ri'on) Atalanta (ăt-d-lăn'td)

Bacchus (băk'ŭs) Baucis (bô'sĭs)

Athamas (ăth'd-măs) Aurora (ô-rô'rd) Boreas (bō'rē-ās) Bosporus (bŏs'pō-rŭs)

Cadmus (kăd'mŭs) Calliope (kă-lī'ō-pē) Cassiopeia (kăs-ĭ-ō-pē'yd) Castor (kås'tēr) Celeus (sē'lē-ŭs) Centaur (sĕn'tôr) Cepheus (sē'fūs) Ceres (sē'rēz) Ceyx (sē'īks) Charon (kā'rŏn) Chiron (ki'rŏn) Cocalus (kŏk'á-lŭs) Colchis (kŏl'kĭs) Colophon (köl'ö-fön) Crete (krēt) Cupid (kū'pĭd) Cyclopes (sī-klō'pēz) Cynthus (sin'thus)

Dædalus (děd'å-lŭs) Danaë (dăn'ā-ē) Daphne (dăf'nē) Diana (dǐ-**š**n'à) Dictys (dǐk'tǐs)

Epidaurus (ĕp-I-dô'rūs)
Epimetheus (ĕp-I-mē'thūs)
Eridanus (ē-rīd'ā-nūs)
Ethiopian (ē-thI-ō'pI-ān)
Europa (ū-rō'pā)
Eurydice (ū-rīd'I-sē)

Gorgon (gôr'gŏn)

Hades (hā'dēz)
Halcyone (hāl-sī'ō-nē)
Helle (hēl'ē)
Hellespont (hēl'ēs-pŏnt)
Hercules (hūr'kū-lēz)
Hesperus (hĕs'pĕr-ŭs)
Hippomenes (hĬ-pŏm'ĕ-nēz)

Iapetus (ŀāp'ē-tūs)
Icarus (ĭk'ā-rūs)
Idmon (ĭd'mŏn)
Inachus (ĭn'ā-kŭs)
Io (ĭ'ō)
Iris (ĭ'rīs)
Ismenus (ĭs-mē'nūs)

Jason (jā/sŭn) Juno (jōō/nō) Jupiter (jōō/pI-tĕr)

Ladon (lā'dŏn)
Latona (lā'tō'nā)
Lethe (lē'thē)
Liriope (lĭ-rī'ō-pē)
Lydia (lĭd'ī-ā)

Medea (mē-dē'ā) Medusa (mē-dū'sā) Mercury (mūr'kū-rī) Metanira (mĕt-ā-nī'rā) Midas (mī'dās) Minerva (mĭ-nūr'vā) Minos (mī'nŏs) Minotaur (mĭn'ō-tōr) Morpheus (mōr'fūs)

Narcissus (när-sīs'ŭs) Nemesis (něm'ē-sīs) Nephele (něf'ĕ-lē) Niobe (nī'ō-bē)

Olympus (ö-lim'pŭs) Orpheus (ör'füs)

Pactolus (pak-tō'lŭs) Pallas (păl'ăs) Pan (pan) Pandora (păn-dō'ra) Parnassus (pär-näs'ŭs) Pelias (pē'lĭ-ās) Peneus (pe-ne'ŭs) Periander (per-I-an'der) Perseus (pûr'sūs) Phaethon (fā/e-thon) Philemon (fĭ-lē'mŏn) Phineus (fi'nūs) Phœbus (fē'bŭs) Phœnician (fe-nish'ăn) Phrixus (frík'sŭs) Pittheus (plt'thus) Pluto (ploo'to) Pollux (pŏl'ŭks) Polydectes (pŏl-ĭ-dĕc'tēz) Procrustes (pro-krus'tez) Prometheus (pro-me'thus) Proserpina (pro-sûr pi-na) Psyche (si'kē) Python (pi'thon)

Sardis (sär'dĭs)

Silenus (sī-lē'nŭs)

Somnus (sŏm'nŭs)

Styx (stiks) Syrinx (sir'inks)

Tantalus (tăn'ta-lus)

Theseus (thē'sūs)

Thessaly (thes'a-li)

Tiresias (tī-rē'shī-ăs)

Titan (tľtăn)

Tmolus (t'mō'lŭs)

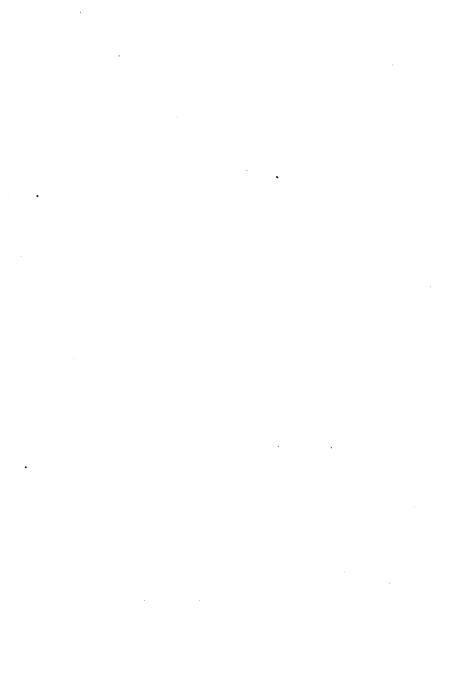
Triptolemus (trip-tŏl'e-mus)

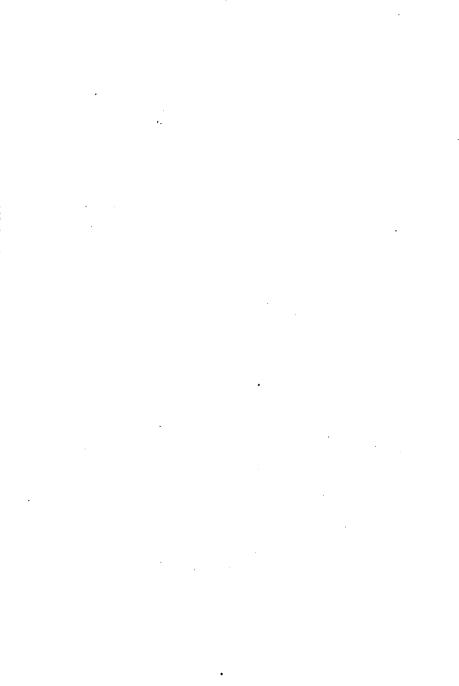
Trœzen (trē'zĕn) Tyrian (tǐr'ĩ-ăn)

Venus (vē'nŭs)

Vulcan (vůl'kăn)

Zeus (zūs)





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